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—turn to page 39

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EDITORIAL

The only way to save our film industry

THE POLITICAL SITUATION has pushed many urgent national problems on one side, among them the British film crisis. Yet this is a very real crisis, affecting the livelihood of many workers and threatening the ruin of an important industry.

Naturally, the public is bewildered and angry. British film makers have been given the chance of a lifetime and have muffed it, like a small boy dropping an easy catch. We can no longer afford to buy unlimited American films; so the home market is wide open to British pictures. Over recent years picturegoers have shown that they prefer British films—provided only that they are good ones. And yet production has slowed to a crawl.

At the moment only eight films are being made in the entire country, and at this rate the whole 1950 output of high-class British pictures is not likely to be more than thirty-five or forty. Of these many will be Anglo-American pictures like *Treasure Island* and *Captain Horatio Hornblower*.

Future plans are sketchy. The Rank Organization will make a film with Jean Simmons, and has a future picture arranged for Margaret Lockwood. Otherwise it will concentrate on films tied up with American movie companies.

Anna Neagle and Herbert Wilcox are making *Odette, G.C.*, at Elstree and Associated British is working on two modest films, one with Phyllis Calvert and the other with Dennis Price.

The Korda people have young Bobby Henrey, of *The Fallen Idol*, in *The Wonder Kid*, and an independent producer is making *The Eagle and the Lamb* with Valentina Cortese. For the rest it is either second features, darkness or the Americans.

What a ridiculous situation for an industry which had been presented with a gilt-edged prospect of prosperity.

As an excuse, the producers themselves offer one explanation—"the crushing burden of entertainment tax." They have a case and they are using it as an excuse for everything. They say that the tax takes too big a cut from the proceeds, even of films which lose money. The Rank people point out that they have paid £4,500,000 in tax on films which lost more than £3,000,000 in the making. From this they argue that without the tax there might have been a profit of over a million.

Simple. But not necessarily convincing. Past experience of the film world suggests that the more money a producer gets, the more he spends. Any remission of the tax could too easily vanish in a new spending spree. The job of the film people is not to seek more spending money by getting reduced taxation, but to show that they can raise the quality of their pictures without vast expenditure, and kick out the people who still cling to the idea that filmdom is a sort of Eldorado of easy money.

The fact is that the film industry itself is full of creative brains, of ideas and initiative, provided the right men are given appropriate authority at the top of the production pyramid. These frustrated people can come to the rescue of the business—if they are given the chance.

STAR and technical salaries are much less to blame for the high cost of films than what is known as "front office" overheads, where so much money has been frittered away in the past.

An important point is that it is *time* that costs the money in film production. Too many producers take months getting through their pictures. They must learn to make them in weeks.

This basic fact can't be denied: enough money enters the box offices of British cinemas every week to keep British studios going—so long as they do an efficient job of providing good entertainment.

The producers should therefore stop complaining about tax and should concentrate on cutting out waste and speeding up production. They should provide for the home market and forget America.

These are the ways to turn the British film industry into a solid proposition instead of a semi-bankrupt paradise for the overpaid and a heartbreak house for so many of the people who really want to make good films.

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FREE SPEECH

Compulsion is needed to cut accidents

Prevention of factory accidents is part of my job and I think that your editorial "Stiffer Safety Rules Would Cut These Accidents" (John Bull, February 4), placed undue emphasis on inefficient management. You advocate the use of mobile films, which is an excellent idea—except that the workers are not interested in it. The management cannot force men to do something against their will.

Unless a Government order is made that certain types of protective equipment will be worn for certain jobs, the same sort of accidents will continue to happen. No amount of talking will alter that.—C. P. Wright, Greenhill House, Bishops Itchington, Warwick.

. . . As a surveyor employed by an engineering insurance company, I find that apathy exists on the part of employers, employees and some of the factory inspectors.

In the case of a goods lift I called to inspect, I found one of the employees with his head through a twelve-inch square frame in the landing door (the glass was missing) looking down the shaft for the lift. It was just above him and one can imagine what would have happened if it had descended.—L. C., Lancashire.

WILFRED PICKLES
writes in John Bull
next week
See page 16

Donald Peers's Secret

Lawrence Earl's article on Donald Peers (John Bull, February 11), asks how he has got to the top. I would like you to know. We first heard Donald Peers sing at the Co-operative Hall in Bingley many years ago.

In those days, he had a fan here, a four-year-old boy who was blind but insisted on being taken to all the Donald Peers shows. When Donald heard of this, he invited the boy backstage and presented him with a toy ukelele. He was so good-hearted and sincere that we have followed his success with keen delight ever since. The boy has since learned to play the harmonica, piano accordion, piano and saxophone, and now runs a small swing band.—Mrs. Mary Bower, 1 Belgrave Road, Bingley, Yorkshire.

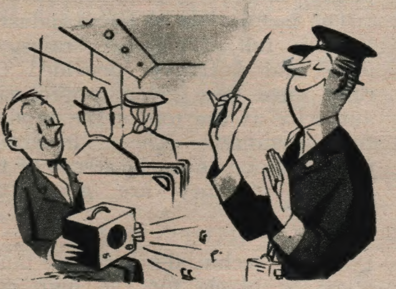
. . . When Donald Peers was appearing in Leeds, I requested a song which he did not sing. Later, I was surprised to receive a letter from him, saying he had prepared the song but had forgotten to sing it and I should have gone backstage to remind him. The letter was written personally by him and showed his courtesy and sincere interest in his fans—perhaps the reason for his popularity. — Mrs. M. Healey, 78 St. Michael's Road, Headingley, Leeds.

. . . One of the girls in a dancing troupe appearing at the same theatre as Donald Peers in Manchester fell during a rehearsal and was unable to dance. She was very disappointed and half way through his own act Donald stopped singing and explained what had happened, then helped the girl to hobble on to the stage to sing a duet with him. Everyone's heart warmed to see her shining eyes.—W. D., Lancs.

. . . Cannot someone persuade Donald Peers to give private studio performances without an audience. All this stupid bobbysoxing makes me feel sick and thoroughly ashamed of my generation.—Miss N. Dockerty, 23 Monieburgh Crescent, Kilsyth, Glasgow.

Music While You Ride

While I was on a lengthy bus journey, a boy sat down beside me with a small portable radio. When the conductor noticed it, he said: "Come on, let's have music while you work." So the boy obliged and we had a musical ride. At the half-way stage, the conductor was replaced by a relief and the first action of the new conductor was to tell the boy to switch off. "It's against the law young man," he said. Was he just being officious?—William Young, 11 Hedley Terrace, Dipton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.



The Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Conductors and Passengers) Regulation, 1936, *says no one may use any instrument that makes an excessive noise.*

Best Of The Serials?

Victor Canning's serial, *A Forest of Eyes,* is one of the most exciting stories I have ever read. I put it above *Night Without Stars* and *A Sort of Traitors* and even above H. E. Bates's *The Jacaranda Tree* which, up to now, I thought the best of your fine string of serials.—D. B., Ipswich.

Final instalment of "A Forest of Eyes" begins on page 27. *News of* John Bull's *next serial is on page* 16.

Growing Younger

An old woman myself, I was very interested in your editorial "Help Our Old People to Lead Worthwhile Lives" (John Bull, February 18). While it is true that people are living longer, it is also certain that they retain their youth much longer. A woman of forty is not middle-aged now as she was in Victorian times and here in our village are some people nearing ninety who can still do a full day's work. This is some compensation for the prospect of an older nation.—Mrs. Elsa Buss, High Street, Orwell, Royston, Herts.

No Metering Of Water

Bertram Horne's plan to solve the water shortage by metering supplies ("Free Speech," February 18), is a completely wrong remedy. Water is free and no country in the world has better filtered supplies than we have. What we lack are properly devised and operated regional reservoirs. Just now the country is deluged and rivers are flooding their banks. But in a few months' time we shall be urged to save water and threatened with prosecution for waste.

We have all developed the habit of accepting these conditions and the town planners studiously ignore the obvious. The few million gallons saved by metering would be a fraction of the torrents that run to waste, and such an imposition would, as usual, hit hardest those who are least able to bear the burden—the dwellers in the slums.—Fred Fletcher, 19 York Street, Moston Lane, Blackly, Manchester.

Thank You, Herbert

Herbert Hodge tells us that he has finished his series of articles and is off to gather material for his book. I think we should thank him for all the homely wisdom and words of good cheer he has given us—and wish his book every success when it is published.—Mrs. M. M. Michael, 242 Earlsdon Avenue, Coventry.

How Skid Kids Began

Norman Phillips's article on the Skid Kids (John Bull, February 18), was interesting. On Holme Slack Council Estate at Preston, we had a cycle speedway fifteen years ago. Quite a number of us could broadside and many preferred cycles without brakes at all. A friend of mine, Mr. Tom Fowler, was the promoter of this track and I rode on it often. — R. M. Bell, 9 Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs.

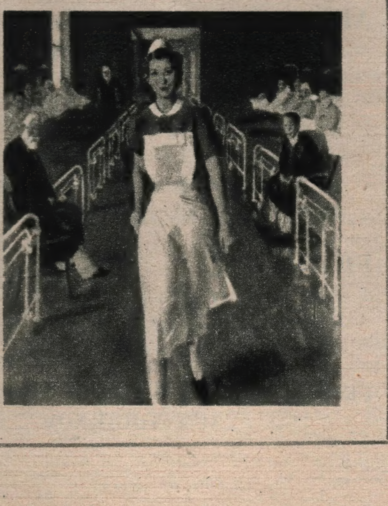
Insulation For Children

Children never seem to be considered when flats are being built and allocated. There is practically no soundproofing and I, with a five-year-old daughter, have just been given a flat immediately above an old age pensioner. My child, naturally, likes to dance and jump, laugh and shout, and though I try to consider the old man's feelings I cannot do so at the expense of my daughter's nerves. — Mother, North Wales.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

When cover artist A. R. Thomson, R.A., was in hospital recently, he found time to study the nurses at work. When he returned, cured, to his Chelsea home, he sat down to paint this picture while the hospital scene was still vividly fresh in his memory. "I found that I dreaded the doctors," he says, "but the nurses were wonderful. In the end, I was really rather sorry to leave."



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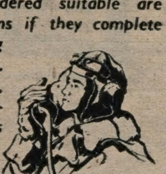

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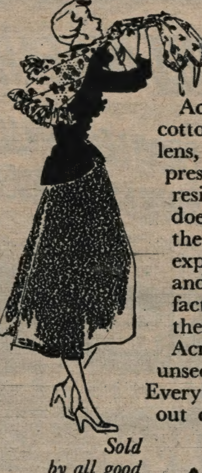

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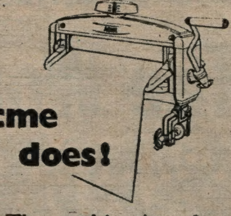

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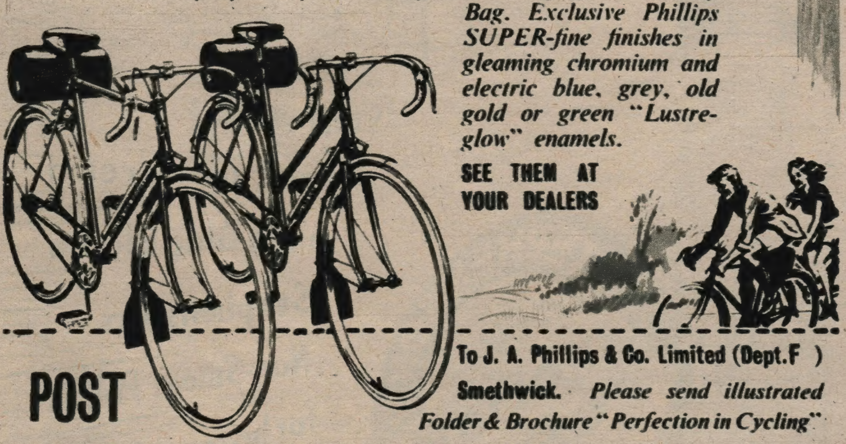

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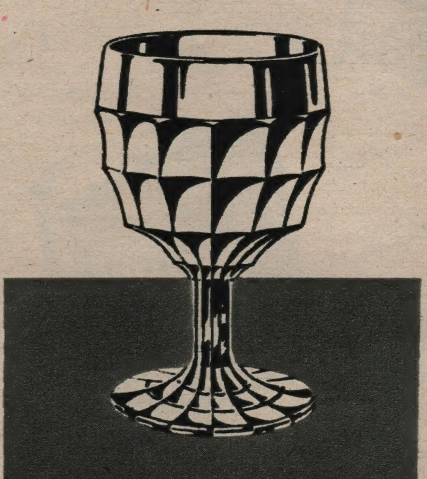

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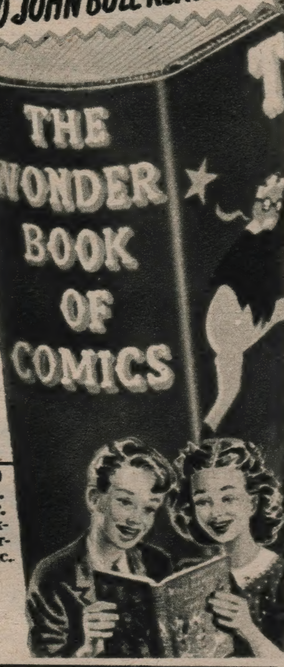
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*P.S.
Don't forget
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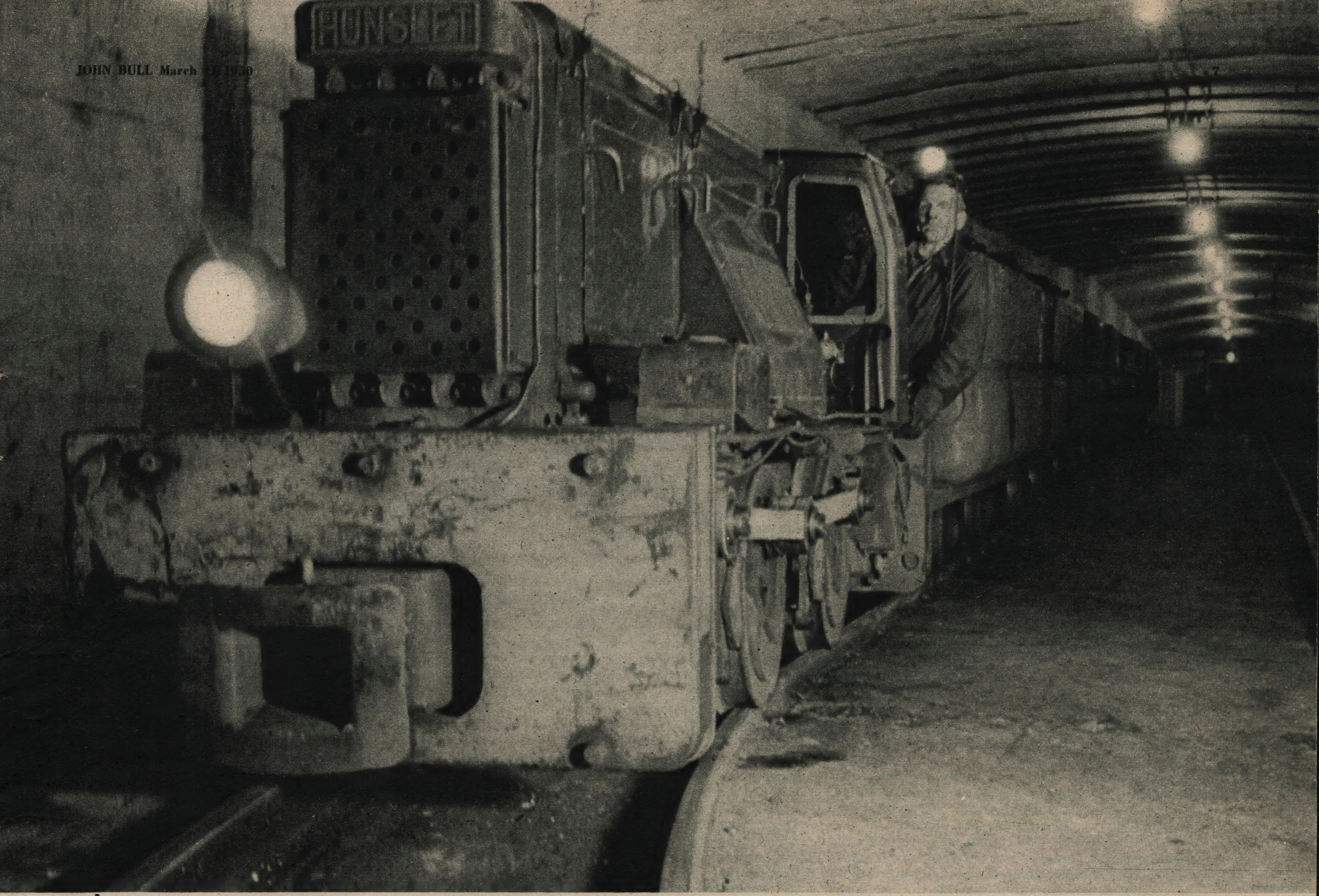


In high, well-lighted Comrie pit, a diesel engine hauls trucks heavily laden with coal. "This is the new mining—and it is a revolution"

Down the mine—like going on the tube

by *HARRY HOPKINS*

THE SHAPE OF BRITAIN'S FUTURE

In many spheres we once led the world. Can we do so again? This new John Bull series takes you behind the scenes of the nation's activity to show that, far from marking time, we're marching forward. First in focus is ***COAL***

THE NOTICE ON THE colliery office window said: "Men made redundant at No. 1 Pit call at the Miners' Welfare Hall for interview.". From her kitchen door in the Holytown miners' row, eighty-five year old Mrs. O'Neill watched them drifting over to the red-brick building with the shiny black Coal Board cars parked down the side.

It was getting to be an old story in Holytown. In June, No. 3 Pit had closed down; in August it had been No. 6; and now, today, one more band of good miners—Mrs. O'Neill's son among them—was facing the growing trek east from the worn-out old pits of Lanarkshire to the brave new mines of Fife and the Lothians.

Some, like Mrs. O'Neill, were too old to change worlds. They belonged here in these stunted "miners' rows" that confronted each other rawly like coolie lines across a waste of mud and cinders and damp washing, looking out on rows of privies and mountainous pitheaps.

Lying on his side at the twenty-one inch high coalface, Joe Smith was nearing the end of the shift. In forty-five years in Thankerton Pit he had worked his way down, like a mole, through seam after seam. And now they'd hit a fault again—the last fault of all. Already the water was rising a foot a week. Two more shifts, and Joe Smith's life's work would be over.

To reach his niche in the coal, Joe Smith had had to descend an eight-foot wide shaft, jog, bent low, a mile and a quarter through a warren of burrows that twisted and turned, that ran uphill and downhill.

Meeting The Challenge

Yet for Joe and his mates the parting would be hard. They did not *want* to go east "among a lot of strangers," they said, crouching in the blackness. "Seams eight foot high in Fife? I'd never feel safe, lad." These folk were having to tear up foundations—and lay them over again. It was a test and a challenge. A challenge they had accepted.

Moving, at the Coal Board's expense, from the black huddle of pitheaps round Glasgow to a brand-new house in a new estate looking out over the rolling hills of Fife, Mrs. Joe McKanna is startled to find the white sheep white. For Joe, a stripper, leaving his hostel cubicle to join her, there are changes as dramatic.

Instead of the dreary, rusty, old-iron disorder of the old pithead, this new pit, Comrie, might pass as a rayon stocking factory. Architect-designed, its flat-roofed buildings are harmoniously grouped around a green lawn ("Keep Off the Grass"), in the centre of which tinkles a fountain—cooling the water for the winding system. Boasts the manager: "We had a fine show of sweet peas and gladioli in the summer."

Picking up his sandwiches at the canteen, leaving his street clothes in one of the 1,500 lockers of the pithead baths and descending the shaft, Joe McKanna finds himself in what might almost be a section of the London Underground. A man is methodically sweeping the floor with a broom. High and well lighted, completely walled in with steel rings and concrete, the road stretches away into the distance. It does not twist after a coal seam. Straight and level it is driven through the stone. This is the new mining —and it is a revolution.

With the oncoming shift, Joe McKanna climbs on to a train and is carried away towards his workplace in the Diamond Seam. The roads are oddly empty. In Thankerton in the same distance we should have passed dozens of men, manning the serpentine, Heath Robinson haulage system. But here the coal rolls by in long trains of three-and-a-half-ton "mine-cars" pulled by diesel locomotives.

Instead of a stripper crouching in the narrow seam, shovelling coal into little three-hundred-weight tubs, a powerful "duckbill" loader thrusts under the pile, feeds it back on to a joggling conveyor which carries it down to a belt conveyor. In turn this decants it on to another belt conveyor, and so to a central loading station on the main road. Here one man, at a lever, sends away 1,200 tons of coal per shift.

A Century Along Wrong Road

Between the rabbit warren that is Thankerton and the underground factory that is Comrie lie a hundred years of history, a technique and a philosophy. When Thankerton was starting in 1835—three years after the great Reform Bill—England was rocketing to power—on coal. The population curve soared after the coal curve. A man bought a royalty lease, tore out the coal as fast as he could. Few doubted that by the magic of individual enterprise all would turn out for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

By the time Comrie was built, that fallacy had come home to roost. With national bankruptcy coming up over the horizon, the mining engineer was at last given his head.

It was almost too late. With twenty rich coalfields, and no place more than a hundred miles from one of them, England in 1947, had the humiliation of importing American coal.

Of the 1,500 pits the Coal Board inherited from 800 companies, many were small and utterly uneconomic, their shape determined not by technical considerations but by the accident of ownerships and royalty leases. In the old central coalfield of Scotland alone, nineteen pits were losing nine shillings on every ton mined.

Britain needed a hundred Comries—but to plan a new pit takes two years, to build it another six years. Cutting its losses, the Board prepared to shut down the worst pits. Of those that remained, every pit, and each of the forty-eight areas and eight divisions, had its plan. Some were patching-up jobs—taking out the ponies (of which there are still 21,000 in the pits), putting in conveyors. Others involved amalgamations. And others were massive schemes of underground reconstruction costing £4,000,000 and quadrupling output.

Pits were electrified, shafts widened and deepened to get out the extra coal. And everywhere, hundreds of feet below the surface, drills were thundering into the rock, pushing forward —thirty yards a week, £20 to £40 a yard—the high level roadways of the new "horizon" mining.

Each plan was different—but always the object was the same: to free more men to bring up to the coalface, to push up O.M.S. O.M.S. —Output Per Manshift—is written on every colliery manager's heart. It is the whole answer to the problem of more coal and cheaper coal. And, at last, very slowly, the barometer of O.M.S. began to go up. In 1949 the corner was turned.

Mostly, this was a triumph of organization, the sum of the concerted daily efforts of thousands of individuals. But an increasing share was owed to the new mining juggernauts like the British invented Meco-Moore, which bite into five feet of coal seam with the force of a hundred horse power, both cutting and loading, short-circuiting the traditional cycle of operations in the pits, sending a continuous, wide, black stream flowing back to the shaft-bottom.

But it is not easy to put these mining robots to work. They demand a level seam over three feet high with a good roof and floor. That is why in the whole of Scotland only two Meco-Moores are in operation. In those "troubled" and "faulted" coalfields, the much-publicised power-loaders have found their chief use in the excavation of new roads.

Nevertheless, the direction had gone out that mechanization must be pushed to the limit. British inventive genius, which had produced the world's first coalcutter in the sixties, was put to work to adapt the Meco-Moore for narrower, steeper seams. And in 1948, forty Meco-Moores turned out 3,000,000 tons of coal; plans were being drawn up to install sixty more. A rising star from Glasgow, the Samson Stripper, drives a wedge behind the coal, splits off a two-foot thick slice, *without dust*. Five men can do the work of forty.

Five tons of coal a minute are scooped out by the "Joy" loader. But in mining the past dies hard

At 2,000 feet deep, the weight of the roof is one ton per square inch. To keep pace with the juggernauts, thundering into the earth at two feet per minute, hydraulic steel pitprops had to be developed. There were other problems.

Machines need men. Unfortunately the Coal Board's legacy in human relations was no better than its material inheritance. You notice an odd thing as you walk past Mrs. O'Neill's miners' row in Holytown. All down the long row, facing out on to the main road, the front doors are blocked up. Years ago—it is a famous story locally—the coal-owner's daughter, riding by, was annoyed by the sight of the miners' wives, staring brazenly from their doorways. She went home and complained, and soon men came to build up the doorways—and open new ones at the back.

Bitterness Of A Race Apart

For a century, cold war raged through the coalfields. In their isolated villages, a race apart, the miners hugged their bitterness to themselves.

But, here again, the new approach is slowly beginning to bear fruit. Principal instrument of the widening of the horizons of the miners' life is the Pit Consultative Committee. Meeting fortnightly, compulsory by law, many of the pit committees got off to a bad start. There were managers who resented all suggestions. There were workers all set to take over the mines. But the managers learned, the workers learned—and the pit committees came to life.

At Newcraighall Colliery, on the borders of Edinburgh, I sat in on one of them. Just before three o'clock they brought some more chairs into the manager's office and the committee members began to arrive—some just up from the pit. Six of the thirteen were elected by regular ballot by the men—two from the coalface, one haulage worker, one tradesman, one man from the surface, a contract worker. The National Union of Mineworkers' area agent and the colliery lodge secretary are *ex-officio* members.

The manager, in the chair, opened with his usual report on output. There was an "inquest" on a breakdown that had held up production during the week. "Dirty coal," said the manager. "It's amazing the complaints that are coming in. So, for heaven's sake, let's keep that to the front."

From the discussion it emerged that a six-foot fault, coupled with a steeply rising coal seam, was making it very hard for the machine-miners to cut the coal without taking in some "clay." From all round the table different "angles" poured in.

"All right," wound up the manager. "I'll have a look at it tomorrow. Anything else?"

"Yes," said Frank Elliot, electrician. "Two busted cables in one day—again." The power-loader operators in the mechanized section were getting into bad habits again.

"I've told them about it," said Bob Findlay, young assistant manager. "But they slip back."

The manager made a note. "It's a costly business—we must keep on at them."

Allocating The New Houses

After that there was the matter of the chiropodist, engaged for a trial six months, at one penny per man per week. With the steepest seams in Scotland, this pit was hard on men's feet. Then there was the matter of the boxing championship entries, and the programme for the ambulance team dance, and the newly started golf club competitions.

And then the inevitable item. Two new houses for allocation, announced the secretary. One for a hardship case, one from the waiting list. He read out some names. . . .

"Och, that's Willie — in the Five-Foot Seam. He's a terrible absentee."

"He's been better lately, though."

"Missed three shifts this week."

The absentee stood revealed. It was all very simple and unpretentious—and yet somehow very impressive. For here was something very new for Britain—something which might yet turn out to be the greatest invention of our post-war era.

The order today is that everything that can be done to enhance safety, to ease the strain on human hand, eye and muscle *must* be done. A director of research into human problems pushes on the use of fluorescent daylight lighting at the coalface. Ventilation is steadily improved: no longer does the miner have to test the direction of the wind before deciding to go down the pit. The scientific service develops a new quick technique for measuring dust, the scourge of the pits. Safety officers press forward new methods of suppressing it. Each division has its special roof control expert. In 1948 fatal accidents were the lowest on record.

But in the mining villages the past dies hard. "No pit's a good pit!" For the fulfilment of its brightest hopes the Coal Board must look to the future.

At the Middleton Residential School — a pleasant group of châlets looking out over the Pentland Hills—I watched that future shaping. To Middleton, a unique mixture of public school, technical college and holiday camp, come fifteen-year-olds from pits all over the Scottish coalfields.

Mornings are devoted to classwork, mining, English, mining science, arithmetic; afternoons to P.T. and athletics; alternate days to practical work on the surface and in the training gallery of Lingrewood Pit, where I watched small groups of boys learning the right way to lay rails, to handle wire-ropes, to build support pillars, to give first-aid. It was all very comprehensive, very detailed, and very thorough.

I asked one of the boys, in the second week of the three months he would spend at the school, what he thought about it all. "Smashing," he said. It certainly was—but was it *real*? Just where did we go from here?

Well, the teachers were ex-miners, a fine lot of men, and very real indeed. And the boys had no doubt at all where they were going—for area general managers had been down in person to tell them. When they got back to their pits, the managers said, their progress would be carefully watched all along the line. The Coal Board was on the lookout for likely lads. Every boy, in fact, now had an area manager's portfolio in his sandwich bag.

The new. Mechanized mining like this at Comrie helped Britain to turn the coal corner in 1949

The old. In drab mining villages, the cold war between owners and men had raged for a century

The Ladder Of Opportunity

In the massive red-sandstone Royal Technical College at Glasgow I talked to one of the first N.C.B. scholarship holders, a young man from Kinglassie named R. Y. Young. It wasn't so long since Young's father, a lifelong pitworker, had decided there were no prospects for his son in the pits. Now there would be a hundred £300 per annum scholarships every year offering four years at a university and a mining degree.

A few floors farther down in the same building I moved another couple of rungs up the Coal Board's broad ladder of opportunity when I found a class of D.P.T.s at a mechanization lecture. D.P.T.s are Directed Practical Trainees, a hand-picked bunch of qualified young men who will spend three years systematically enlarging their knowledge of mining and the coalfields in all their aspects, doing all sorts of jobs in all sorts of pits.

They were a keen and cheerful band—as they had every reason to be. Some of them had been mining surveyors. Now almost unlimited prospects lay before them. For with a £300,000,000 coal development plan, spreading over a generation, Britain stood in need of a new sort of mining planners: men whose plans, starting with the exploration of the depths of the earth, ended with new mines, new communities, new industries.

Already the advance parties are out. In fields all over Britain little groups of workmen stand by derricks. In 1948 they bored 82,000 feet through the fantastic layer-cake that is the earth's crust. As the drill grinds down into the crust of the earth, foremen watch the water that is forced back to the surface. Every change of shade tells a story. "Fireclay, black and rooty, nine inches." . . . "Blaes, burned and indurated, six inches." . . . "Coal, hard and bright, eight inches." . . .

As the bore goes down, scientists meticulously enter each stratum's description in the Bore Journal. A bore may go on for two years, go down 4,000 feet and a journal run to fifty pages with hundreds of entries.

When the water turns black, the foreman stops the drill. Special equipment is attached to extract a clean "core" of the coal seam. As they come up, the black cores are laid out in order on the grass. Then the Coal Survey's little van comes and carries them away—packed as carefully as if they were Ming porcelain.

In a big stone villa in a Glasgow suburb—Coal Survey Laboratory of the Scottish Division—samples are ground to powder, chemically analysed, tested for heat-giving value, put through a miniature gasworks. Other specimens may go to a paleobotanist for microscopic examination. To his expert eye the spores or tiny seedlings in the vegetable matter from which coal was formed millions of years ago are the "fingerprints" of a coal seam, linking one with another.

I was shown a number of small grey "buttons" fixed to a card—the results of heating powdered coal in crucibles to 925 deg. centigrade. Some had "caked" and swollen. That meant possible metallurgical coke. Others had "caked" and shrunk. Those coals might do for gasworks. Others were still just powder. They wouldn't "cake" at all.

To most of us coal is just coal, but to the geologist or the coal exporter it is at least six thousand different things—and just which is vitally important. And it may change even in the same seam. So every three months samples are taken from top to bottom of every seam in every pit.

Underground Map-making

Clue by clue, solutions to the mysteries of underground Britain are fitted together. In Argyll an unexpected five and a half-foot seam turns up at thirty fathoms. Gaps are filled in the course of the Great Seam, bucking and twisting through the Lothians. Do rich coal seams join up under the Firth of Forth?

But as the underground map is filled in more thoroughly than ever before or in any other country, Coal Board planners round out their National Plan. With a hundred new pits on the way to their drawing boards, these men look fifty years ahead every day. But already here and there, you can catch a glimpse of the new Britain they are calling into being.

Speeding through the open country three miles back from the Firth of Forth, motorists suddenly come upon a huddle of huts clustered around two wooden winding towers. Four hundred feet below men are digging and blasting two vast holes in the earth—the shafts of Rothes, the furthest advanced of the Scottish Division's ten projected major sinkings. Cement pours down the holes to form a thick wall, sealing off the water. The cost: £400 a yard.

The shafts are a sixth of the way down. By the time they reach bottom, in 1954, they will have cut through eleven rich seams of coal. One hundred and eighty-three million tons lie below these fields. When Rothes gets into its stride 3,000 men, working at an O.M.S. twice current averages, will send 6,000 tons a day shooting up to the streamlined pithead—for a hundred years.

No Longer Isolated

A few miles to the north, in a house borrowed from the paper mill, the newly gathered staff of the Glenrothes New Town Corporation prepares the foundations for the community of 30,000 people that will grow up on the green slopes that rise from the gorge of the Leven.

But, though mines call it into being, and its vice-chairman, "Honest John" Sneddon—he got the nickname by refusing his £1,000 a year salary—is a Kelty miner, Glenrothes will not be a mining town. A green and gracious place, it will have its own light industries, to offer a full and varied life to its citizens, among whom miners will be only one in eight.

For with Rothes's new pit and Rothes's new town the picture that began to shape at Middleton is rounded out. The miner ceases to be a race apart, a rough, black-faced, bitter race, condemned to battle with the earth, and becomes an ordinary citizen living a normal life, doing a valuable job.

Our important raw materials on this island are few, coal, inventive genius, people. For years we have wasted them. Now we are learning to *use* them.

It is a long, hard road from Thankerton to Comrie, from the miners' row of Holytown to a neighbourhood unit in Glenrothes—and we are not there yet. But since VE-Day we have came far and fast.

THE END

Night at the Inn

by GEORGETTE HEYER

LLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

The gloomy, candle-lit room, the creaking chair, set his nerves on edge. Odd how deathly still it was. He sat up. It was more than odd

THERE WERE ONLY three persons partaking of dinner at the inn, for it was neither a posting-house, nor a hostelry much patronized by stage-coaches. The man in the moleskin waistcoat, who sat on one of the settles flanking the fireplace in the coffee-room, gave no information about himself; the young lady and gentleman on the other side were more forthcoming.

The lady had been set down at the Pelican after dusk by a cross-country coach. Her baggage was as modest as her appearance, the one consisted of a bandbox and a corded trunk; the other of brown curls smoothed neatly under a bonnet, a round cashmere gown made high to the neck and boasting neither frills nor lace, serviceable half-boots and tan gloves, and a drab pelisse. Only two things belied the air of primness she seemed so carefully to cultivate: the jaunty bow which tied her bonnet under one ear, and the twinkle in her eye, which was as sudden as it was refreshing.

The gentleman was her senior by several years: an open-faced, pleasant young man whose habit proclaimed the man of business. He wore a decent suit of clothes, with a waistcoat that betrayed slight sartorial ambition; his linen was well laundered, and the points of his shirt collar starched, but he had tied his neckcloth with more regard for propriety than fashion, and he displayed none of the trinkets that proclaimed the dandy. However, the watch he consulted was a handsome gold repeater, and he wore upon one finger a signet ring, with his monogram engraved, so that it was reasonable to suppose him to be a man of some substance.

He was fresh from Lisbon, he told the landlord, as he set down his two valises in the taproom, and had landed at Portsmouth that very day. Tomorrow he was going to board a coach which would carry him within walking distance of his paternal home: a rare surprise for his parents that would be, for they had not the least expectation of seeing him! He had been out of England for three years; it seemed like a dream to be back again.

The landlord, a burly, rubicund man with a smiling countenance, entered into the exile's excitement with indulgent good humour. Young master was no doubt come home on leave from the Peninsula? Not wounded, he did hope? No, oh, no! Young master had not the good fortune to be a soldier. He was employed in a counting-house, and had had no expectation of getting his transfer from Lisbon for years. But—with off-hand pride—he had suddenly been informed that there was a place for him at headquarters in the City, and had jumped aboard the first packet. No time to warn his parents: he would take them by surprise, and wouldn't they gape and bless themselves at sight of him, by Jupiter! He had meant to have put up at the Swan in the centre of the town, but such a press of custom had they that they had been obliged to turn him away. The same at the George; he hoped he was going to be more fortunate at the Pelican?

The landlord, gently edging him into the coffee-room, reassured him: he should have a good bedchamber.

He was also promised a dish of mutton and haricot beans, with soup to go before it, and a dish of broccoli to accompany it. He rubbed his hands together, saying boyishly: "Mutton! Real English mutton! That's the dandy! That's what I've been longing for any time these three years! Bustle about, man! I could eat the whole carcase!"

BY this time he had been coaxed into the coffee-room, a low-pitched apartment, with shuttered windows, one long table, and an old-fashioned hearth flanked by high-backed settles. On one of these, toasting her feet, sat the young lady; on the other, his countenance obscured by the journal he was perusing, was the man in the moleskin waistcoat. He paid no heed to the newcomer, but the lady tucked her toes under the settle and assumed an attitude of stiff propriety.

The gentleman from Lisbon trod over to the fire and stood before it, warming his hands. After a pause he observed, with a shy smile, that these November evenings were chilly.

The lady agreed to it, but volunteered no further remark. The gentleman, anxious that all the world should have a share in his joy, said that he was quite a stranger to England. He added hopefully that his name was John Cranbrook.

The lady subjected him to a speculative, if slightly surreptitious, scrutiny. Apparently satisfied, she relaxed her decorous pose and said that hers was Mary Gateshead.

He seemed much gratified by this confidence and bowed politely and said, "How do you do?" This civility encouraged Miss Gateshead to invite him to sit down, which he instantly did, noticing as he did so that a pair of narrow eyes had appeared above the sheets of the journal on the opposite settle and were fixed upon him. But as soon as his own encountered them they disappeared again behind the newspaper.

Searching his mind for something with which to inaugurate a conversation, Mr. Cranbrook asked Miss Gateshead whether she, too, had found the Swan and the George full.

She replied simply: "Oh, no! I could not afford the prices they charge at the big inns! I am a governess."

"Are you?" said Mr. Cranbrook, with equal simplicity. "I am a clerk in Nathan Spennymore's counting-house. In the ordinary way I can't afford 'em either, but I'm very plump in the pocket just now!" He patted his breast as he spoke, and laughed.

And, after a few minutes, while the man in the moleskin waistcoat read his paper, and the landlord laid the covers on the table, he was telling her how he had been sent out to Lisbon three years ago, and what it was like there, and how an unexpected stroke of good fortune had befallen him, and he was to occupy a superior place in the London house.

Miss Gateshead told him that she was the eldest daughter of a curate with numerous progeny, and she was bound for her first situation. Very eligible, she assured him! A large house, not ten miles from this place, and Mrs. Stockton, her employer, had graciously promised to send the gig to the Pelican to fetch her in the morning.

"I should have thought she might have sent a closed carriage in this weather," said John bluntly.

"Oh, no! Not for the governess!" Miss Gateshead said, shocked.

The landlord came in, bearing the leg of mutton, which he set down on a massive sideboard. His wife, a decent-looking stout woman in a mob-cap, arranged various removes on the table, bobbed a curtsy to Miss Gateshead and asked if she would care for a glass of porter or some tea.

Miss Gateshead accepted the offer of tea, and, after a moment's hesitation, untied the strings of her bonnet and laid this demure creation down on the settle.

The man in the moleskin waistcoat folded his journal and bore it to the table, propping it up against a tarnished cruet, and continued laboriously to peruse it. His fellow-guests took their places at the other end of the board. The landlady dumped a pot of tea at Miss Gateshead's elbow, flanking it with a chipped jug of milk and a cup and saucer, and John bespoke a pint of ale.

"And what for you, sir?" asked Mrs. Fyton, addressing herself to the man at the bottom of the table.

"Mr. Waggleswick'll take a heavy-wet as usual," said her spouse, sharpening the carving-knife.

The soup, ladled from a large tureen, was nameless and savourless, but Miss Gateshead and Mr. Cranbrook, busily engaged in disclosing to one another their circumstances, family histories, tastes, dislikes and aspirations, drank it without complaint. Mr. Waggleswick seemed even to like it, for he called for a second helping. The mutton which followed the soup was underdone and tough, and the side-dish of broccoli would have been improved by straining.

"I don't think they can enjoy much custom here," said Miss Gateshead wisely, during one of the landlord's absences. "It is the most rambling old place, but no one seems to be staying here but ourselves, and you can *lose* yourself in the passages! In fact, I did," she added, sawing her way through the meat on her plate. "I have not dared to look at the sheets, but I have the most old-fashioned bed, and I asked them not to make up the fire again because it was smoking so dreadfully. And what is more, I haven't seen a chambermaid, and you can see there is no waiter, so I am sure they don't expect guests."

WHEN Mr. Waggleswick had finished his repast, he noisily picked his teeth for some time, but at last pushed back his chair and took himself off.

Miss Gateshead, who had been covertly observing him, whispered: "What a strange-looking man! I don't like him above half, do you?"

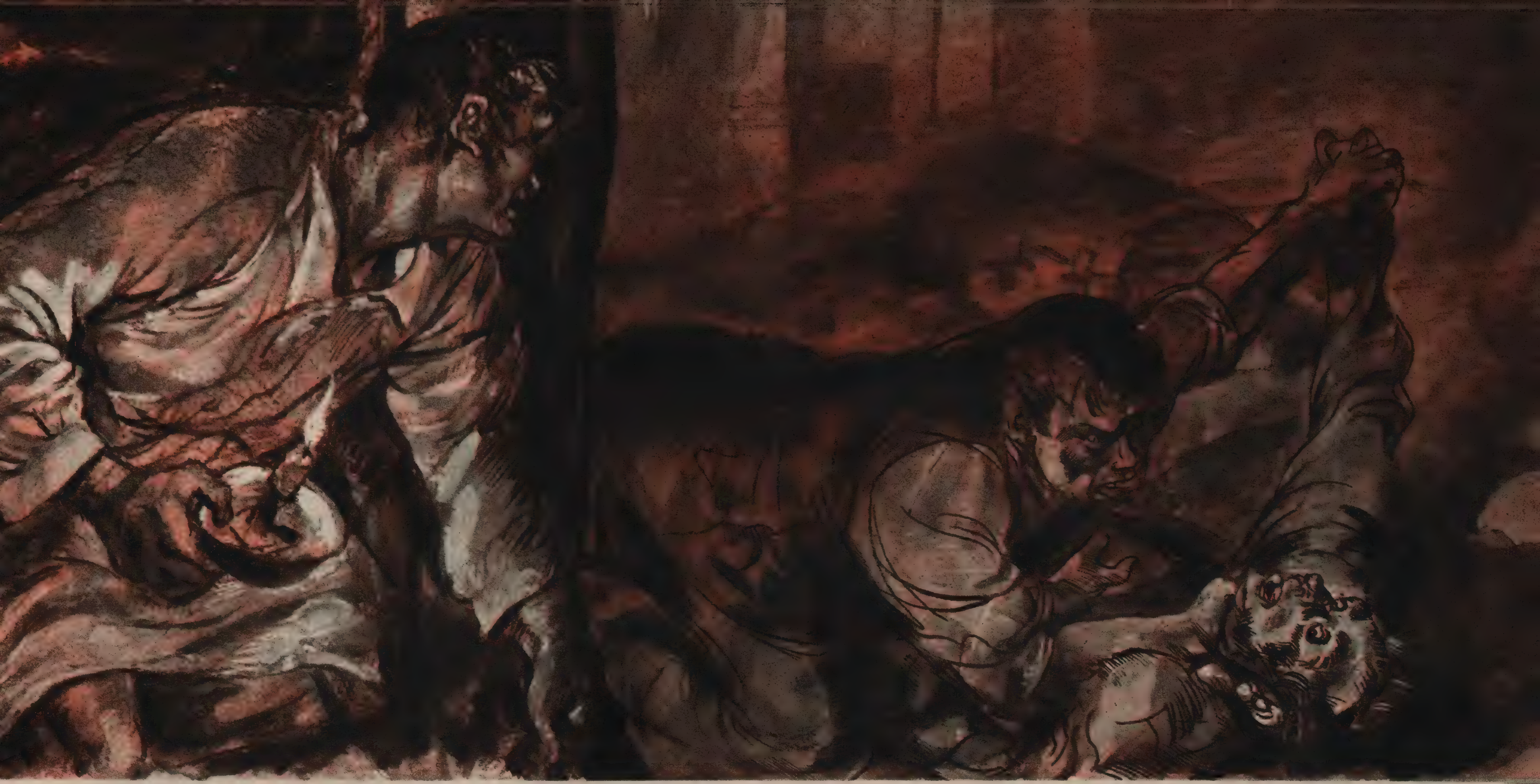
"Well, he is not precisely handsome, I own!" John replied, grinning. "His nose is broken. I dare say he is a pugilist."

"How horrid! I am glad I am not alone with him here! Did you notice how he watched you?"

"Watched me? He barely raised his eyes above his newspaper!"

"He did when he thought you were not looking at him. I know he was listening to every word we said, too. I have the oddest feeling that he may even be listening now!"

The door opened as she spoke, and Miss Gateshead's nervous start was



John lit the candle and got out of bed. A heavy thud shook the room. The two men were writhing and heaving on the floor, silent but murderous

infectious enough to make John look round sharply. But it was only the landlady who came into the room, with a tray, on which she began to pile the plates and cutlery. She remarked that it was a foggy night, so she had tightly closed the shutters in the bedrooms.

"Get a lot of fog hereabouts, we do," she said, wiping a spoon on her apron and casting it into a drawer in the sideboard. "Like a blanket it'll be before morning, but it'll clear."

"Who is our fellow-guest?" asked John.

"Mr. Waggleswick? He's an agent of some sort: I don't rightly know. Travels all over, by what he tells me. We've had him here two-three times before. He's not much to look at, but he don't give no trouble. I'll bring your candles in presently. Your room is at the end of the passage, sir; turn to the right at the top of the stairs, and you'll come to it. Fyton took your bags up."

Waggleswick did not return to the coffee-room, and as no other visitors, other than the local inhabitants, who crowded into the taproom across the passage, came to the Pelican, Miss Gateshead and Mr. Cranbrook were left to sit on either side of the fire, chatting cosily together. Miss Gateshead was most interested to hear about Portugal, and as John, like so many young travellers, had filled a fat sketchbook with his impressions of an unknown countryside, it was not long before she had persuaded him to fetch it down from his room.

The landlord was busy in the tap, and Mrs. Fyton was not to be seen, so John went upstairs unescorted, trusting to the landlady's directions.

A hanging oil lamp lit the staircase and cast a rather feeble light a little way along the passage above, but beyond its radius all was in darkness. For a moment John hesitated, half inclined to go back for a candle, but as his eyes grew more accustomed to the murk he thought that he could probably grope his way along the corridor to the room at the end.

He did this, not entirely without mishap, since he tripped down one step in the passage and up two others, slightly ricking his ankle in the process and uttering an exasperated oath. However, he reached the end of the passage and found that there was a door confronting him. He opened it and peeped in, and saw, by the light of a fire burning in the high-barred grate, his two valises, standing in the centre of the room. As he knelt before them, tugging at the strap round the larger of them, he glanced cursorily round the apartment.

It was of a respectable size and boasted a very large bed, hung with ancient curtains and bearing upon it a quilt so thick as to present more the appearance of a feather mattress than of a coverlet. The rest of the furniture was commonplace and old fashioned and comprised several chairs, a dressing table, a washstand, a huge mahogany wardrobe, a table by the bed, and a wall cupboard on the same side of the room as the fireplace. A pair of dingy blinds imperfectly concealed the warped shutters bolted across the window.

The sketchbook was easily found and he went off with it, shutting the door behind him. He remembered the treacherous steps in the corridor and went more carefully, putting out a hand to feel his way by touching the wall. It encountered not the wall, but something warm and furry.

He snatched it back, his eyes straining in the darkness, his heart suddenly hammering. Whatever he had touched was living and silent, and quite motionless. "Who's that?" he said quickly, an absurd, nameless dread knocking in his chest.

There was a slight pause, as though of hesitation, and then a voice said in a grumbling tone: "Why can't you take care where you're a-going, young master?"

Mr. Cranbrook recognized the voice, which he had heard speaking to the landlord, and knew that what he had touched was a moleskin waistcoat. "What are you doing here?" he demanded, relieved, yet suspicious.

"What's that to you?" retorted Waggleswick. "I suppose a cove can go to his room without axing *your* leave!"

"I didn't mean—— But why were you spying on me?"

"Spying on you? That's a loud one! What would I want to do that for?" said Waggleswick scornfully.

John could think of no reason, and was silent. He heard a movement, and guessed that Waggleswick was walking away from him. A moment later a door opened farther down the passage and the glow of firelight within the room silhouetted Waggleswick's figure for a brief instant before the door shut behind him.

John hesitated, on the brink of retracing his steps to lock his own door. Then he recollected that he carried his money on his person and had packed nothing of value in his valises, and he shrugged and proceeded on his way.

MISS GATESHEAD was seated where he had left her. She greeted him with a smile that held some relief.

"The fog muffles all the noises and makes one think the world outside dead!" she said. "I don't think I like this house. A rat has been gnawing in the wainscoting in that corner, and a few minutes ago I heard the stairs creak, and quite thought it must be you. Do you believe in ghosts?"

"No, certainly not," said John firmly, resolving to make no mention of his encounter with Mr. Waggleswick.

Since it was plainly his part to comfort Miss Gateshead, he adopted a bracing tone, saying that she was perhaps tired after her journey, and was suffering from an irritation of the nerves. She accepted this explanation meekly and came to sit at the table so that she could more clearly see Mr. Cranbrook's Peninsular sketches.

Shortly after ten o'clock the landlady came in with two tallow candles, stuck into pewter holders. She offered to escort Miss Gateshead up to bed, and since John thought he might as well go to bed, too, as sit on a settle beside a dying fire, he said that he would also go upstairs. He and Miss Gateshead had reached an excellent understanding by this time, and although nothing so blunt had passed between them as a declaration on Mr. Cranbrook's part that he meant to follow up this chance acquaintanceship with a view to extending it rather considerably, his intention was as patent as it was unavowed. Nor did Miss Gateshead make any attempt to discourage him in his resolve.

They took up their candles and followed Mrs. Fyton upstairs. The light of the candle she carried threw wavering, grotesque shadows on the walls and disclosed, upstairs, two other passages, leading off at right angles from the one which ran the length of the house.

"You know your way, sir," said Mrs. Fyton, nodding a chaperon's dismissal to John. "Come along, miss!"

John knew an impulse to accompany Miss Gateshead, at least to her door. He thought she was looking scared and guessed that this was probably the first time she had ever been alone in a strange inn. However, Mrs. Fyton seemed a motherly woman, who might be trusted to look after a young lady, so he said goodnight and contented himself with lingering at the head of the stairs until he had seen which door it was that led into Miss Gateshead's room. It lay at the far end of the house to his, with Waggleswick's between them: an arrangement John did not much like.

He went on to his own room. His valises were just as he had left them, and he unpacked such articles as he would require for the night.

This done, he undressed and got into bed, setting the candle on the table beside him, and thrusting his watch and his pocket-book under the pillow.

The bed was a feather one, and though rather smothering, not uncomfortable. He opened his book and began to read, occasionally raising his head to listen intently. His

"Watch out for this one—he bit *me* last week"

room was situated too far from the tap for him to be able to hear the murmur of voices there. He heard nothing at all, not even the stir of a mouse.

This dense stillness began presently to make him feel uneasy. It was not very late and it would have been natural had some sounds broken the silence. In any inn one expected to hear noises: the voices of other guests; footsteps; the slam of a door; the clatter of crockery; or the rumble of wheels in the courtyard. It seemed odd that he had seen no servant other than the tapster.

The silence was so profound that more than once he found himself lowering his book to glance round the room; and the creak of the chair in which he had sat to pull off his boots actually made him sit up in bed to make sure that he was alone.

When the candle was burnt down to a stub he began to be sleepy. He closed the book and snuffed the candle. A faint glow showed that the fire still lived. He turned on his side, the feather bed billowing about him, and in less than ten minutes was asleep.

He awoke he knew not how much later, but so suddenly and with such a certainty that something had roused him that he was alert on the instant, and listening intently. Not a sound reached his ears. The glow from the hearth had disappeared; the room was in darkness.

He raised himself on one elbow. As he crouched thus, his ears straining, his eyes trying unavailingly to pierce the night, the conviction that he was not alone took such strong possession of his mind that the sweat broke out on him. He stretched out his hand and groped cautiously on the table for the tinderbox. It brushed against the candlestick, which made a tiny sound as it was shifted on the table, and in that moment it seemed to John that something moved in the room. He said breathlessly: "Who's there?"

As he spoke his fingers closed over the tinderbox. He sat up with a jerk, felt the bed move as something cannoned into it, and, even as he flung up his hands to grapple his unknown visitant, was thrust roughly down again on to his pillows, a hand clamped over his mouth and another gripping his throat in a strangling hold. He struggled madly, trying to wrench away the clutch on his windpipe. His hands brushed against something warm and furry; a voice breathed in his ear: "Dub your mummer!"

He tore at the unyielding hands, writhing, and trying to kick his feet free of the bedclothes, the bed creaking under his frenzied efforts. The grip on his throat tightened till the blood roared in his ears, and he felt his senses slipping from him. "Still! Still!" hissed Waggleswick. "One squeak out of you, and I'll land you a facer as'll put you to sleep for a se'ennight! Bow Street, clodpole! *Bow Street!*"

John stopped struggling, partly from surprise at these last words, partly because the breath was choked out of him. The hand on his throat slightly relaxed its grip. He drew a sobbing breath and distinctly heard the creak of boards under a stealthy footfall. It seemed to come from the direction of the wall-cupboard beside the fireplace.

"For God's sake, lay you still!" Mr. Waggleswick's breath was hot in his ear.

He was free and heard the stir of the bed curtains, as though Waggleswick had shrunk behind them. He lay perfectly still, rigid and sweating. If Waggleswick were indeed a Bow Street Runner, he ought undoubtedly to obey his instructions; if he were not, it did not seem as though he would have much compunction in silencing those who defied him, in a manner highly unpleasant to them.

The darkness seemed to press on his eyeballs; he had difficulty still in breathing, but his senses were quite acute, and he caught the sound of a key softly, slowly, turning in a lock. This unquestionably came from the direction of the cupboard; a faint lightening of the gloom gradually appeared as the door of the cupboard opened, as though a very dim light had been concealed there. It was obscured by a monstrous shadow, and then dwindled as the door was pushed to again.

A loose floorboard cracked; John's fists clenched unconsciously, but a warning hand coming from out the curtains and pressing his shoulder kept him otherwise motionless.

Someone was coming inch by inch towards the bed: someone who knew the disposition of the furniture so exactly that he made no blunder. The heavy coverlet stirred over John's limbs and, as his hands came up instinctively, smothering folds were over his face, pressed down and down over nose and mouth. He grabbed at this new assailant's wrists, but before his fingers could close on them the pressure abruptly left his face and he heard a sudden scuffle, a strangled, startled oath, and the quick shifting of stockinged feet on the floor.

"The glim! Light the glim!" panted Waggleswick.

A chair went over with a crash; something was knocked flying from the dressing-table, as the two men swayed and struggled about the room. John's desperate fingers found the tinderbox, and as, with trembling fingers, he contrived to strike it, a heavy thud shook the room.

The tiny flame flared up; the landlord and Waggleswick were writhing and heaving together on the floor, silent but murderous.

John lit the candle and tumbled out of bed, hurrying to Waggleswick's aid. The treatment he had suffered during the last few minutes had considerably shaken him, and he felt rather dizzy, nor did a wild kick from one of Fyton's plunging legs do anything to improve his condition. The landlord was immensely strong, and for several minutes he made it impossible for the two other men to overpower him. He and Waggleswick rolled on the floor locked together, but at last John managed to grab one of his arms as he was attempting to gouge out Waggleswick's eye, and to twist it with all his might.

Waggleswick, who happened at that moment to be uppermost, was thus enabled to drive home a shattering blow to the jaw. This half stunned the landlord, and before he could recover, a pair of handcuffs had been locked round his wrists.

"Bide, you, and watch him!" commanded Waggleswick, out of breath, but still surprisingly active. "Take my barker, and don't stand no gammon!" With that, he thrust a pistol into Mr. Cranbrook's hand, and dived into the cupboard.

John found that his knees were shaking. He sat down, gun in hand. He had only just recovered his breath, when a glimmer of light shone through the cupboard door, growing brighter as footsteps approached. Mr. Waggleswick came back into the room with a lamp.

"Caught both the bites red-handed! *She's* as bad as he is, and worse! Get up, hang-gallows!"

He endorsed this command with a kick, and the landlord heaved himself to his feet. A settled, dogged expression had descended on to his face, an expression so malevolent that it was almost impossible for John to believe he could be the same man as the comfortable, smiling host of a few hours earlier.

Waggleswick went on: "Jem and me'll lock the cull and his moll in the cellar till morning. Taken me a rare time to snabble you, my buck, ain't it? You'll pay for it! Get down them dancers, and don't forget this little pop o' mine!"

He motioned the landlord to go before him into the cupboard, grinning at John's face of horror.

"A stairway. Down to the wash-house. Took me three visits to get a sight of it, too! Ah, and you'd have gone down it if I hadn't been here, master, like a good few other young chubs! To think I been here four times, and never a blow come worth the biting until you walked in tonight, with your pocketbook full o' flimsies, and your talk of no one suspicioning you was in England! Axing your pardon, you was a regular noddy, wasn't you, sir?"

Mr. Cranbrook agreed to it humbly, and brought up the rear of the little procession that wound its way down a steep, twisting stair to a stone-flagged wash-house, where a huge copper was steaming in one corner, and the tapster was standing over Mrs. Fyton, loudly protesting her innocence of evil intent, in a chair in the middle of the room.

"My assistant—junior, o' course, but a fly cove!" said Waggleswick, jerking a thumb at the tapster. "All right, Jem: we'll stow 'em away under hatches now!"

John, whose revolted gaze had alighted on a chopper, lying on a stout, scrubbed table, was looking a little pale. He was left to his own reflections while the prisoners were driven down to the cellar; and his half-incredulous and wholly nauseated inspection of the wash-house made it unnecessary for Waggleswick to inform him, as he did upon his return with Jem, that it had been the Fytons' practice to chop up the bodies of their victims, and to boil down the remains in the copper. "Though I don't rightly know what they done with the heads," added Mr. Waggleswick thoughtfully.

A horrible thought crossed John's mind. "Miss Gateshead!"

"*She's* all right and tight! She was known to be putting up here, and Fyton never ran no silly risks."

John looked at him. "She must not know of this! Has that monster disposed of many travellers in this frightful way?"

"There's no saying," replied Waggleswick. "Not above two or three since we got wind of it in Bow Street. Dear knows 'ow many went into that there copper afore us Runners come down 'ere!"

On this macabre thought, Mr. Cranbrook retired again to his interrupted repose. He considered what plausible tale he would concoct for Miss Gateshead's benefit in the morning.

They met in the coffee-room, still shuttered and unaired. Miss Gateshead was unbarring the shutters when John came into the room, and her comments on the lack of orderly management in the inn were pungent.

"I tugged and tugged at the bell, and who do you think brought me a can of hot water at last?" she said. "The tapster!"

"It is too bad! But the thing is that they were cast into a pucker by the landlady's being taken ill in the night," explained John glibly. "Should you mind putting on your bonnet and stepping out with me to partake of breakfast elsewhere?"

"Not at all!" replied Miss Gateshead promptly. "I am very sorry for the landlady, but she almost deserves to be taken ill for keeping her house in such a shocking state!" She paused, coloured slightly, and said in a shamefaced voice: "I am afraid you must have thought me very foolish last night! Indeed, I cannot imagine what can have possessed me! I never slept better in my life! Is it not odd what absurd fancies one can take into one's head when one is a little tired?"

"Most odd!" agreed Mr. Cranbrook, barely repressing a shiver. "Most odd!"

THE END

Bank manager—the safety first man

by RICHARD DERRICK

He takes as much care over a child's money box as a safe full of notes. A man with a thousand secrets, he always keeps mum—even if it is awkward at times

Her cheque book is a sign of personal reliability—and safer, too

AS A BANK MANAGER I am appalled at the risks taken by people with their money. A few months ago, an old age pensioner came to deposit what was left of his savings. Somebody had broken into his chicken house in the night, taken a dozen hens, and found the biscuit tin he had hidden there containing £200 in notes.

With tears in his eyes he handed me the £43 that he had previously kept in a teapot on the mantelpiece. It was all he had left.

It might happen to anybody with a hoard. A burglar found £7,000 behind a Hackney butcher's dressing table. Another went off with £8,000 that a Colchester ice cream man kept under his bed.

These losses are entirely unnecessary. Banks today provide safekeeping for cash, and simple machinery for paying out and receiving money in any form. But security has to be paid for in various ways. Sometimes it means a little inconvenience.

I live in a flat above the local branch. Just as I was shaving one morning, the telephone rang. "Is that the bank? Catching a train in half an hour, old man. Forgot to draw any money yesterday. Can I come round now and cash a cheque?"

"Sorry. Nobody here yet," I said.

"But *you're* there," insisted the caller. "Surely you have the keys!"

I explained to my annoyed customer that it was impossible for me to get the cash before we opened. He did not realize that overnight everything here is twice locked, once with my keys and once with my assistant's—a different set.

Holiday With Pay

I started as a bank clerk when sixteen and became a manager at forty-one. A quarter of a century's training proves a man trustworthy. But the double-lock system, which all banks use, is an additional guard. It is aimed for a start at preventing such rare cases as that of the north country manager who recently went on a two-year spree with £40,000 of the bank's money.

We bank managers no longer carry a revolver as we once did. A pity! But even if a burglar waylaid me and stole my keys, he would not get far without the other bunch—which, of course, is not on the premises at night.

I may as well warn any incipient criminal, too, that breaking into a bank might not be as profitable as he would expect. The actual cash we keep on the premises is rarely more than ten per cent of the deposits.

A bank is a "money shop" that has to make profits like any other business. Notes and coins in the till or safe are idle, and so cannot earn the interest on which we exist.

The total national float is the same—about a tenth of deposits. The figure is controlled by the Treasury, through the financial machinery of the Bank of England.

Not only is a banking account safer than keeping money under the mattress or up the chimney, it is, to some extent, a sign of personal reliability. The law makes us very careful whom we accept. A glib stranger walked briskly into my branch recently, opened a suitcase and planked down £500 in notes.

"Here we are; new client for you," he said to my cashier. "Let's have a cheque book, will you?"

He looked offended when I asked him for two references, although this is normal banking routine and I felt that he knew it. He reluctantly gave two names, but his behaviour had made me suspicious. He turned out to be an undischarged bankrupt, legally debarred from having a banking account.

Like this man, most new customers want a current account so as to be able to write cheques. Deposit accounts are not as popular as they once were, mainly because the rate of interest now is kept small to divert funds into Government investments. "Home safe" accounts provide a better rate but are limited to £100.

The idea of these special money boxes is to interest youngsters and others who might otherwise not use a bank. They have slots for sixpences, shillings, etc. and a hole underneath for notes.

Once an anxious mother brought in one that was completely mangled. She demanded a replacement.

"I don't want sonny to find out," she said. "His father opened it with a hacksaw and a chisel. He needed money quickly to put on a horse."

Keeping The Amount Dark

Most of the money and most of our work is in current accounts. We give each customer a regular statement of what he has paid in and out, and the balance.

A gay, elderly customer asked what his balance was the other day and, in the normal way, my cashier scribbled the amount on a slip of paper so that others present should not overhear. A few minutes later his wife came back waving the slip.

"What's Harry been doing with his money?" she demanded heatedly. "He ought to have more than this. Let me see his statement!"

She was shown into my office and as tactfully as possible I had to refuse her request. Two days later her husband insisted on buying me a drink. There was no need. I could guess from his cheques what he had been up to, but naturally I could not tell a soul—not even his wife.

Our worst nuisance was an eccentric old gentleman who used to come in daily and ask archly: "What does the bank owe me *this* morning?" One day one of the younger clerks spotted him crossing the road, dashed to the door and hissed the amount in his face before he opened his mouth. The daily calls ceased.

How Cheques Are Cleared

No interest is paid on a current account, however large the amount. What accrues helps to pay for running the highly involved, countrywide machinery of banking.

Buying and selling is for the customer merely a matter of writing a cheque or pushing one across a bank counter to pay it in. What the bank has to do is far more intricate.

During the day, four or five clerks enter the details of a customer's cheque on various forms and ledgers. Before night it is sorted and listed with hundreds of other cheques paid in during the day. (There is a separate list for each of the "Big Five"—Barclays, Lloyds, Midland, National Provincial, and Westminster—for each of the private banks, the foreign banks, for the Post Office, Paymaster General, Bank of England and many more.)

The cheques and lists are then posted to head office. Summarized again with many more from other

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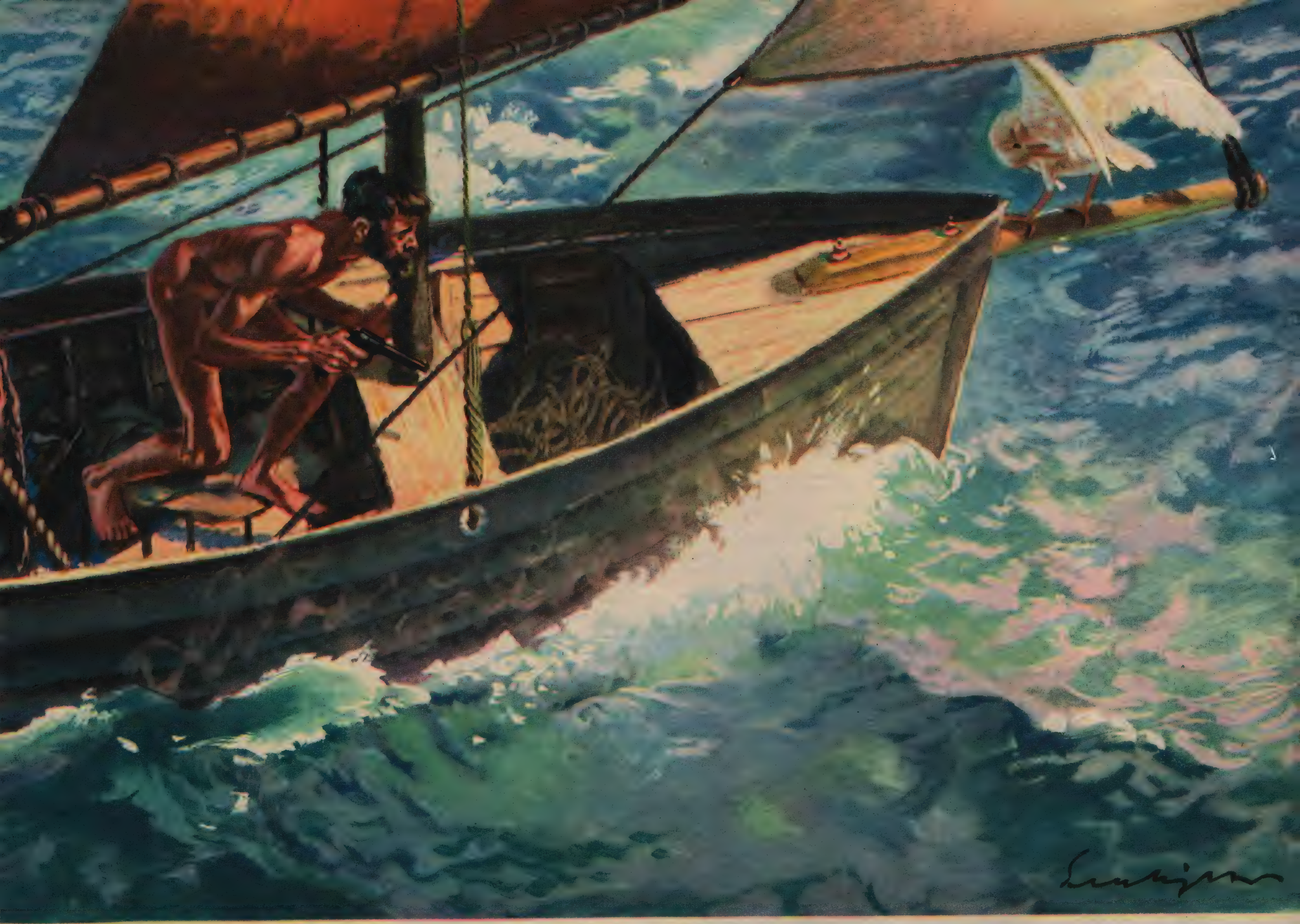


Cautiously moving forward towards the unsuspecting gull, I raised my revolver slowly, inch by inch. Our lives might depend on what happened

VOYAGE OF THE GILCA (2)

by Captain "MICK" JENNINGS

Our desperate bid for food

Captain "Mick" Jennings continues his personal account of an almost unbelievable true adventure. To escape from the Japanese in 1942, he and an Army companion, Bombardier Jackson Hall, set sail from Enggano, off Sumatra, in a seventeen-foot dinghy. Between them and their intended destination, Australia, lay 1,500 miles of hazardous sea. Their troubles started not long after setting out. Tropical storms lashed their small craft. Later on, an aggressive shark damaged the rudder. Worst of all, on the fortieth day of their journey, they found their carefully planned food stocks contaminated, and had to jettison the lot. . . .

THE THOUGHT OF FOOD was apparently not exclusive to us, as every day sharks swam close to the boat. We estimated how many days' supply of food we would have if only it were possible to catch one.

We had on board some heavy galvanized wire, about an eighth of an inch in diameter, which we had taken from the stranded freighter, and from this I made a number of hooks, cutting the bait end at an angle of approximately sixty degrees, and then flattening it with the hammer end of the axe until the tip of the barb was not only sharp but also very hard. Lashing the hook securely to twenty feet of grass rope, we baited it with cloth, and flung it over the after end.

The great experiment had begun. Remembering the days when we had watched our towed garments, it was now the duty of the one at the tiller not to lose sight of the twirling bait. But, as before, after an extra big following wave which momentarily obscured the cloth, *Gilca* rose like a gull, to show a frayed rope's end.

We pulled it in, another hook was lashed on, and with two very hungry soldiers' hopes this was again cloth-baited and heaved over into the sea. We were fast running short of bait, and our only piece of rope was dwindling rapidly as trial after trial was made—until the hook trailed a mere two feet behind the rudder. And though we never saw any kind of fish approach, that also vanished, and with it our anticipation of raw shark steaks.

During the early hours of a cold morning we were both awakened and startled by a loud, vigorous bumping alongside the boat. It was difficult in the darkness to ascertain the cause until *Gilca* heeled over, disclosing that one end of the port outrigger had come adrift.

We were afraid the planks might be stove in, so I grabbed the axe, handing it to my companion, who cut the offending rigger adrift. Daylight saw the pair of us performing balancing feats along the slender runners connecting the starboard outrigger.

It was essential we divest *Gilca* of this encumbrance, as each time it went under a wave the dragging action tended to make us sail in circles. The stability of the boat had gone, but we consoled ourselves with the thought that *Gilca* would now make much better speed; and heaven knows we wanted speed, and in the right direction, too.

During all this time not once did Hall utter one single grouse, either about food or our desperate situation. I could not have had a better companion. To be sure, we talked about food, but only in the abstract sense—that it was as necessary to the human being as petrol was to a motor engine.

Silences grew longer between us, sitting each with his own particular thoughts, staring at the horizon during the daylight hours, and at the stars of the Southern Cross by night, steering a course which we hoped would bring blessed relief. Our lack of astronomical knowledge was appalling, and neither of us knew that to sail "on the Cross" would take us nowhere near our objective.

We must have looked a queer pair, both naked. The skin on my friend's body had assumed a tender rose-pink, due to exposure. A thick-matted thatch of flaming red hair reached nearly to his shoulders, and with a shaggy beard of the same colour he might easily have been the prototype from which McGlusky sprang.

In contrast to Hall, my skin was burned to the colour of a Malay; my hair and beard were of a similar length, liberally streaked with grey. Certain afflictions began to make themselves felt, due, no doubt, to our rapid reduction in weight. Being painfully thin, we suffered excruciating agony from the huge sores on our thighs.

We would wake from uneasy slumber with a feeling of intense pain from the inside of the knee, caused by the weight of the other knobbly knee which had been resting on it. Much massaging was necessary before any relief could be obtained.

Was I Going Blind?

One particular morning, I woke before dawn owing to my knee trouble, and took over from Hall at the tiller, and with a curt "On course" he scrambled past me to his bed. We had no energy to waste on speech these days and, while rubbing my knee with one hand, I guided *Gilca* with the other.

In the early light of dawn I searched the distant horizon for land, but a great heavy tiredness seemed to have descended upon my eyes, and for a moment or so I thought I was going blind. Trying to focus objects in the boat met with little better success, but while staring at the compass I found that, provided I did not try to open my eyes wide, the heaviness did not oppress me.

An hour or so later a groan warned me that my companion was regaining consciousness, and, with much stretching and yawning, he finally sat up. He turned towards me, and with his shaggy mane framed against the canvas background of the sail, remained stock still, staring. Then his jaw dropped, leaving a gaping hole in the upper half of his beard.

His hairy face looked almost inhuman as he looked at me through tiny slits. For several moments there was complete silence, until I broke it by asking what had happened to his eyes. The spell was gone, and in a cracked voice he asked: "Have you seen yours, Mick?"

Not having a mirror on board, we both looked over the starboard side of the boat into shadowed water. Our reflections were, indeed, unpleasant to behold: the eyelids and the soft cavities under the eyes had swollen out like huge water blisters, giving us a repulsive appearance not unlike that of gigantic bullfrogs.

Foodless Fourteen Days

It is perhaps an interesting medical problem why we should both have been afflicted with this particular complaint at precisely the same time. We had been starving now for fourteen days, and neither of us had had an evacuation since the food had been found to be contaminated. In fact, food did not greatly interest us during our waking hours; we became quite content to sit and drink water, chatting on rare occasions about our families and the time we would have when we got to Australia.

To climb from my bed into the tiller cockpit required a tremendous effort of willpower, but the reverse direction was comparatively easy because the watch was over and I savoured the thought of rolling up in my blanket with the hope of glorious oblivion.

Although we both had violent and fanciful dreams, neither of us reached the stage of having hallucinations about seeing land; rather did we believe that our previous lives had been only dreams, and that always we had lived in this tiny boat on the sea. There was no such thing as land; it was mythical stuff.

To look over the side was dangerous, for the sun made a deep cone of light through which large, fantastically coloured fish glided lazily. It appeared to be so cool and wonderful down there, so silent and restful; yet always came the thought of loved ones and of my pal lying asleep.

Nearly always we were helped away from morbid thoughts by the weather, and when again it became stormy, *Gilca,* without outriggers, bobbed like a cork. *Gilca* was altogether too lively, making it impossible for us to stand.

This we attributed to the mast being too high rather than to our weakened condition. So after getting the sail down we decided that when the sea calmed we would unstep the mast and cut about four feet off it, and hoped the boat would be more manageable.

We rode to our sea anchor that night, and the following morning woke to a calm, brassy sea without even a suggestion of wind. This was just the type of weather we wanted for the tricky business of mast-cutting; and, not being bothered by such mundane things as having to prepare breakfast, we decided to do the work while it was cool and we had energy from the night's sleep.

The sail was detached and the stay wires unlashed from the gunwale fastenings. All that now remained was to lift the mast out of the hole in the thwart; so with all the energy we possessed Hall and I lifted, wrestled and tugged at that five-inch diameter pole until it was laid floating in the sea with the base of it securely fastened inboard. Taking turn and turn about, we hacked at a point some four feet from the bottom, and with much stertorous breathing eventually accomplished the cutting.

Our Most Severe Trial

Hall used the old step as a model and started to fashion a new one on the newly cut end. Many rests were necessary before the work was completed to our joint satisfaction. Then came our greatest trial of the whole voyage. The weather began to change, and whereas the sky had been a gorgeous blue flecked with cirrus clouds, it became rapidly overcast, turning the sea to a leaden tint.

The wind, too, joined in the game of making distressed mariners more distressed, and there was great danger of our losing the mast altogether. We grabbed the "mainspring of our motor" and tried to rear it by placing the foot in the hole in the thwart.

Hall and I lifted at the point of balance. The foot of the mast slipped, and, replacing it, we tried again, but to no avail. Many times did we persist, until it became obvious we were too weak to lift the thing high enough to allow the base to enter the hole. The rising sea had been sufficient to urge us on to do our absolute uttermost, but we had to admit complete defeat.

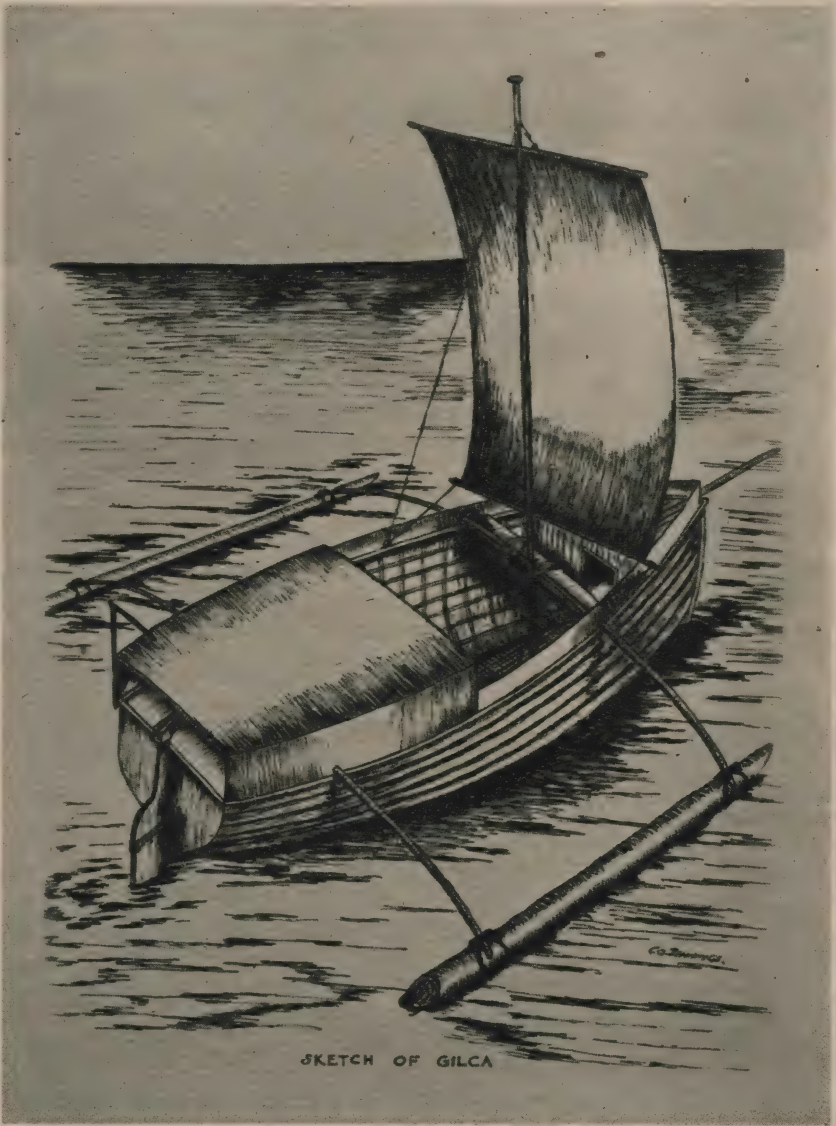
My chest felt ready to burst, and a suspicious taste of blood in my mouth warned me of the impossibility of further strain. Sitting back, gasping and trembling, I thought of the eighteen previous days of starving, and, looking at my swollen-eyed friend's wasted body, cursed myself for all the fools in the world for having agreed to unship the mast.

THE TWO MEN . . .

Captain Jennings: at the time of the *Gilca* adventure he was forty-two—only a poor swimmer

Bombardier Hall: Jennings's companion and fellow-Yorkshireman was twenty-eight—a non-swimmer

. . . AND THEIR BOAT



Jennings's own drawing of the small craft that faced a huge task

After an imposed rest we tried again to step the mast, but it was useless. For three solid hours, with an ever-worsening sea, we tried to do the impossible. Hope was not dead within us, but we were worn out; our undernourished bodies could not cope with the task; and if the mast was lost we might as well blow our brains out, because nothing could save us.

Then, with the knowledge that we had tried every conceivable thing that human beings in our position and condition could do, we stood clinging to the mast for support, Hall at one side, myself at the other, gasping, trembling and staring — beaten, completely beaten, but too tired to move.

For a while I watched my companion's face carefully and noticed the look of strain gradually disappear, to be replaced with a shy, inquiring smile. His mouth opened, and in a hardly audible voice he whispered: "Why not say a prayer, Skipper?"

Wondering if I understood aright, I looked at him in dumb amazement

STARTING IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

A SPECIAL SERIES by WILFRED PICKLES

WILFRED PICKLES, the *Have a Go!* star, whose life story in JOHN BULL proved so popular with readers, has signed on with JOHN BULL again.

In next week's issue, Pickles will write the first article of a new series which he has prepared specially for JOHN BULL.

He has chosen as his weekly theme: **The Most Important Things in Life**—and he brings to this intimately written and helpful series all the sincerity, humour and downright common sense that have endeared him to millions.

—AND A THRILLING NEW SERIAL

Next week's JOHN BULL will include, too, the first long instalment of a great new serial—a story that in atmosphere and characterization matches the outstandingly successful serials already published in JOHN BULL.

"The Murders in Godolphin Square" is the title of the story. Set in postwar London, it introduces some fascinating characters, and has many thrilling and mystifying situations. There's even something of a mystery about the well-known name of the author himself—David Frome. That's one of the things that will be cleared up next week.

There will be a huge demand for next week's JOHN BULL. To avoid disappointment place a regular order immediately.

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while he nodded his head slowly to show he understood the peculiarity of his request. My trembling voice answered him by saying: "We've tried everything except that; it can't make matters any worse," and, closing my eyes, I moistened my cracked lips in an effort to speak more clearly.

I was about to begin when *Gilca* lurched to a heavier wave than usual, causing me to open my eyes and keep them riveted on the piece of rotten half-inch grass rope which lashed the mast to the boat, and which stood between us and certain death. Over the thwart and partially burned foredeck lay the tattered sail like a shroud.

I began to pray. "Almighty God, help us and give us strength to re-step the mast; we've done *all* we can, and now we ask for Divine assistance. Amen."

My prayer may seem funny to some people. But, believe me, nothing was less funny; we were absolutely and utterly helpless. Neither of us was what people would call religious, and I am sure Hall's suggestion to pray was purely a "brainwave."

The prayer lasted about half a minute, and with a "*Now* let's try" to my companion, we picked up the mast as though it weighed ounces instead of pounds and re-stepped it. Hall's red beard opened in an unbelieving smile, and my grey one followed suit, as we automatically turned to face the wide expanse of ocean to mutter our thanks.

We felt new beings, and Hall demonstrated his new lease of life by trying to sing a song entitled "My hat's on the side of my head." It was a miserable croak, but we were happy.

As I have previously mentioned, the only book we had on board was the Bible, and due probably to the mast incident, it became our practice at two o'clock each afternoon to read a chapter from the New Testament. Unfortunately, my sight had deteriorated to such an extent that I could not see the print; so the reading devolved totally upon Hall. I had never read the Bible before, and neither, I think, had Hall.

One Hope Was Left

June 30 dawned a glorious sunny morning with just the right amount of wind for splendid sailing, provided we had been travelling in the opposite direction. This was our "deadline" day, the sixty-first at sea and our twentieth without food of any kind. Opening the safe, I took out the chart, which showed we were still two hundred miles from North-West Cape.

We felt it strange that no patrolling aircraft had been sighted, and were not unnaturally disappointed, as we had hoped to be picked up before now. It was obvious that we could not make Australia against the south-east winds, and it was also horribly clear that we could not last much longer without food.

There was only one hope left, and that was to turn and use the wind, making for the eastern tip of Java or the island of Bali. According to the wind chart the current sat in that direction, and ironically it was also the old sailing route to Japan. Conferring on this matter, we agreed, but this time very, very doubtfully, that we would try to hold out without food for another ten days, this being my estimated time to reach Java, where we hoped it might be possible to ship a hundred coconuts and again try for freedom, but *next* time for Africa.

Our motto of "Australia or sink" had regretfully to be abandoned, and we put about and laid a course north and east towards the enemy's outstretched arms.

We had lost weight at an alarming rate during the twenty days' fast, and with knee and elbow joints badly swollen we looked pitiable objects. To all intents and purposes our race was run. We were doomed men, and whether we could survive a further ten days of starvation was very problematical.

At 2 p.m. Hall produced the Book and read through the chapter, finishing with his usual "Here endeth the reading of the Lord's holy word." Then he wrapped the Bible up and replaced it in the wooden box along with the charts.

Miraculous Intruder

Suddenly, while I was about to snatch forty winks on the bed-slats, a low burring sound attracted my attention. A seagull was hovering with fast-beating wings about a foot above the bowsprit. It took several seconds before my numbed brain registered the fact that this white-feathered object represented food and that I had to do something to get it.

My trembling hands crept inch by inch to the chartbox, where I kept my revolver. Opening the lid, I gripped the weapon, lifting it noiselessly from among a conglomeration of sun glasses, dividers, logbooks and charts. Removing the protective oiled rag wrapping, I glanced at Hall. He nodded a silent "good hunting."

The bird rested some ten feet from where I was seated, but the hazards to be overcome included getting off the loose bedboards without making a sound and crossing some four feet of "no-man's land" to the mast, all in full view of the quarry.

My plan of campaign was to cross the four feet of open space to the mast, as I dare not trust my trembling hand and pumping heart to take a pot-shot.

Turning its head from side to side, the gull seemed satisfied with its security and started to rub with its beak under one wing, then under the other. This gave me the opportunity I was looking for, but still I did not relax my caution.

I felt my barefooted way across that vast four feet of space. Once, when halfway across, the bird turned and looked full at me. Remaining absolutely still, I was examined intently for an unconscionable period, during which time my blood nearly froze; then it resumed whatever it was doing under its wings.

Cautiously moving forward again, I finally attained the five inches of cover provided by the mast. The "great desire" sat perched on the bowsprit four feet beyond, but, still with infinite patience and caution, I raised my revolver inch by inch to the firing position and took a "bead" on the plump portion of the gull's shoulder. Gripping the butt of the weapon with my right hand, my left pinned it to the mast in the hope of eliminating the trembling of my body.

Taking a deep breath, I squeezed the trigger gently, and began to think the striker would never work. My eyes began to water; the grey and white target appeared to recede and become indistinct as though I was looking through a pane of untrue glass.

The fingers of my left hand were hurting due to the power of the grip in pinning the revolver to the mast. Just when I thought it would be necessary to wipe my eyes and take another breath the weapon fired, and the gull left the bowsprit.

Through their tiny slits my eyes telegraphed the joyful message to my brain that in the shoulder of the bird was a red hole about the size of a sixpence, and that the bird was falling into the sea some two feet from the boat. I shouted: "Jack, get it." *Gilca* was moving at a decent speed and it was necessary for us to move rapidly, as otherwise the sharks might beat us to it.

Hall got the seagull in with one of the basket oars. Shaking hands, we chuckled with delight and were half demented over our success, each of us fondling the bird to convince ourselves that this was no dream.

While Hall grabbed the axe to perform the act of decapitating the gull, I produced an enamel mug, into which the neck of the headless bird was thrust and pumped completely dry of blood. We added fresh water with just a dash of sea water for flavouring, and enjoyed a mugful of the most delectable drink in the whole world—at any rate our world.

Then Hall sharpened the knife on the axe edge preparatory to dissecting our lunch.

No plucking was to be done—that process was much too slow—and while skinning the gull Hall said it reminded him of many ducks he had handled in similar fashion. There was no fish in the bird's gullet, but that did not worry us at all; we were completely satisfied.

Here was the thing we craved for most—*food*—and, while sweetbreads and legs were being dropped in our respective enamel mugs, it suddenly dawned upon me that this was not the only bird in the world, and it was possible that another miracle might happen. Turning my watering mouth from the mug, now full of choice, luscious meat, I very deliberately cleaned my revolver in case another gull should land.

Six-hour Feast

We chatted away like two old women trying to calculate the additional sustenance we would derive from the meat. That ten days' additional starving could certainly be accomplished with such a base to work from was our unanimous decision. A meal of such magnitude seemed unbelievable, and, although terribly hungry, neither of us ate one single piece of flesh until the division had been completed. Then Hall put down the knife and said: "Let's go, Skip."

We sat one on each side of the water tank steadily chewing the exquisite raw flesh and looking at each other with smiling eyes. We were, for the time being, utterly content. This was the first food we had eaten for twenty days.

Six hours later, in the soft light of evening, we were still chewing bones, chewing them to destruction, in the process of which I broke two teeth of my dentures; but such a thing could not dismay one who felt as I did. The flesh of the bird had been beautifully tender, and, most surprisingly, did not taste of fish.

NEXT WEEK: Seventy days at sea—and three gulls in thirty days our only food! Tension grows between us

Jimmy
JEWEL

Blakeley ponders a new script. He treats his actors rough: music hall slapstick is his material, custard pies and bags of flour his stock-in-trade

Slapstick king rides the film crisis

by *NORMAN PHILLIPS*

Critics may sneer, the censor raise eyebrows—but the North of England film-maker claims to know "how to keep the cinemas going"

JOHN EDWARD BLAKELEY, a sixty-one year old Manchester grandfather, is a cheerful sort of chap whose idea of good, clean fun is to throw a £1,000 a week pair of comedians into the murky waters of the River Irwell. The fact that a large percentage of the population between Oxford and Newcastle-upon-Tyne enjoys this sort of antic enables Blakeley to indulge in such whims and, at the same time, earn steady and handsome rewards in an industry which is anything but stable.

By self-appointment film maker to the North of England, Blakeley is currently one of the few successful and contented men in the cinema world.

The incident on the Irwell, a sluggish stream flowing through Manchester, involved two otherwise immaculate comics, Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss. As author, director and producer of a film entitled, not without reason, *What a Carry On,* Blakeley had his stars chase a man along the river bank.

"We had to catch the fellow and then all fall in," Jewel recalls. "The Irwell is just about the filthiest place imaginable. When we climbed out we looked like a couple of sweeps. And there was Blakeley laughing like a blinking drayman."

Despite this addition of insult to injury and a score of other indignities in the interests of comedy, Jewel and his partner retain a warm affection for Blakeley. "Quite a nice bloke," Jewel says, "even if he does get a bit het up at times."

Blakeley's temper is, indeed, almost as marked as his taste for low comedy. He is ready to admit a low boiling point and his fiery nature is partly responsible for several of his current feuds. Two of these running battles, both without malice, involve the censors and the critics.

The censors and Blakeley do not see eye to eye on the artistic merits of a household utensil common to many bedrooms. In one of his films an illusionist transforms a top hat into one of these objects. "Cut it out," said the censors. "It's vulgar."

"Of course, it's vulgar," says Blakeley, who prides himself on his ability to produce films suitable for family consumption. "It's a gag I've used before and everyone got a good laugh—even the censors who passed it."

The second and more spirited of Blakeley's vendettas is with the critics who scorn his productions. His Mancunian ire is directed in particular towards London reviewers whom he regards as effete and completely out of touch with the average filmgoer's tastes.

"How can anyone in London judge a film of mine," Blakeley asks, "when they don't know the first thing about the people for whom I cater?"

One trade paper has made so many unkind remarks, according to Blakeley, that he finally banned it from his previews. "But they got in somehow," he says sadly. Blakeley then countered with a bold advertisement: DON'T RELY ON PRESS REPORTS.

"It's hard work battling with critics," he declares. "It's bad enough competing with U.S. films without being hampered by slams from reviewers. Still, I keep on going. They've been saying things about my films for ten years and they haven't stopped me yet."

One of the remarks Blakeley resents most is that his films are "not good box office." He can show that his pictures get regular showings in 2,000 North of England cinemas. Even the first George Formby picture he made in 1934 (and Blakeley admits it is "shocking"), is still being shown today.

Blakeley made the Formby film in two weeks for the sum of £2,750, a financial and technical feat which even he cannot hope to equal. Nowadays, when a low-budget picture costs anything upwards of £100,000, the Manchester studios are turning out features for £40,000 to

£50,000, but it is a scale Blakeley did not dream of sixteen years ago.

"The first Formby film, *Boots, Boots,* was made in one room over a garage," Blakeley recalls. "It was finished in two weeks because everyone worked night and day. At the trade show they all hissed at it."

While passing through Walsall one night, Blakeley decided to break a firm rule of his and take a look at one of his own films. He noticed *Boots, Boots* playing at the local cinema and tried to get a seat. He was told the theatre had been full all the week. People were paying to see the picture the experts had sneered at.

Confirmed in his faith in the regular cinema patron, Blakeley made *Off the Dole* with Formby on a slightly larger scale. It cost £7,500 and took three weeks to make. Since then he's averaged two to three productions a year.

The reason Blakeley never goes to see one of his own films, he says, is "I can see too many mistakes in them. Anybody can do better a second time."

Whatever he considers his mistakes, Blakeley is by no means repentant when it comes to custard pies, pails of water and other household utensils with which he stocks his slapstick pictures. If there is a bathroom scene in one of his films, the patrons can count on someone, fully dressed, falling into a tub full of water. If there's a billiard table in evidence, the props will include a set of eccentric balls that wobble all over the place.

For many of his gags Blakeley frankly acknowledges his debt to the music hall. He is a frequent visitor to the Palladium in London where he usually sits in a box so that he can watch the audience rather than the stage.

This is so he can gauge the effectiveness of the entertainers. If a comedian can't rock the gallery, he's not Blakeley's style.

Frank Randle, an ideal Blakeley star, has a director's share of profits

Music hall comedy on the screen : Jewel and Warris in *What A Carry On*

His original entry into the cinema world, and the one which qualifies him as a dean of the industry, was at Warrington in 1908. There he converted a shop into a 200-seat picture house and showed two-reel productions starring such forgotten heroes as Broncho Billy and John Bunny.

From cinema manager, Blakeley progressed to film renting and further increased his knowledge of the patron's tastes. One lesson he learned from Charlie Chaplin, whose first films came to Manchester about thirty-five years ago. Chaplin started with one-reel productions and finally moved up to full-length features. The first of these was *Tillie's Punctured Romance* with Marie Dressler.

"The renters all turned it down," Blakeley says. "They couldn't see it as a feature picture." Blakeley could see Chaplin's possibilities and he went to London with £1,500 to buy the rights for the cinemas in Lancashire, Cheshire and the Potteries.

Tillie's Punctured Romance was earning money until about four years ago. Recently it made a reappearance in a shortened version and it still attracts the customers.

Started With Operas

The influence of the early Chaplin films, with their comic cops, bags of flour and other slapstick effects, remains with Blakeley. Strangely enough, when he first went into production in the twenties, he was involved, not in comedy, but in film versions of operas.

He made twelve of them. It was only when he began starring such musical hall favourites as Formby, Jewel and Warriss, Frank Randle and Tessie O'Shea that Blakeley found himself in his element.

The Blakeley technique with these artists is somewhat removed from ordinary studio procedure. There is a script and its general outlines are sometimes followed, but his stars are accustomed to being told to go ahead on their own.

"I'll never forget my first day," one comedian says of Blakeley. "He asked me what I was going to do and when I asked for a script he said: 'You think of something to say. Be funny.'"

These methods of producing and directing, while apparently haphazard, have their appeal for artists who trek to Manchester for a Blakeley rôle. "There's a sort of family atmosphere about the studio," one London actor says. "You work hard but the money is good. You can't plan to get Saturday afternoon off or even Sunday, but you can be sure your cheque will be there every Friday."

Salaries represent the major portion of Blakeley's budget. He explains this by indicating the £1,000 a week paid Jewel and Warriss for seven weeks and the £642 a week fee to Norman Evans over a similar period. Frank Randle, according to the producers, draws down at least £500 a week, and as a director of the company, shares in the profits.

Because he does not use either the Oxford or B.B.C.'s rules of pronunciation, Randle makes an ideal Blakeley star. According to one of his associates, Blakeley is honestly revolted by the Oxford method of speaking and about the worst thing he can say about an actor or a screenplay is that it's "la-di-dah."

To his scorn for anything la-di-dah, Blakeley adds a reasonable horror of waste or extravagance. "He can do for one shilling what would cost the Rank organization five shillings," says one of Blakeley's admirers. While there may be some exaggeration in this comparison, the Manchester studios can give the British film industry some lessons in economic operation.

Blakeley himself receives visitors to his studio in an office which is far removed from the usual plush elegance of a cinema mogul. Although he is the director, producer and managing director of the firm, Blakeley works in simple surroundings.

He sits on the same canvas folding chair, marked RESERVED FOR MR. J. BLAKELEY. PLEASE KEEP OFF, as he uses on the set. His only extravagance is an electric fire and a coal fire to keep the place well above normal temperature.

A Fatherly Figure

Blakeley's only concession to the sartorial extremes of the cinema world are the occasional red bow tie and the grey, red, black, white and yellow braces he affects with his conservatively cut business clothes. Rather than the producer of slapstick comedy, he suggests the father of five and grandfather of ten children that he is.

A horseshoe, the gift of one of his daughters, is one of the few decorations on his office walls. This room adjoins the two studios which Film Studios (Manchester) Ltd. has created out of an abandoned Methodist church.

When the church was taken over after the war (it had been an A.R.P. centre), it was complete with stained glass windows and a marble pulpit.

The stained glass in a movie studio offended Blakeley's well-developed instinct for removing waste and he spent considerable time in trying to persuade the Methodist church to take the windows away at his expense. When he was unsuccessful in that direction, he offered them to the Roman Catholic authorities, who gladly accepted them for use in the next church they build.

"They were worth well over £1,000," Blakeley says, "and the colours could not be duplicated today. I can't understand anyone not wanting them."

Uses Audience

Possession of its own studios keeps the Manchester company's budget down. Blakeley is also partial to out-of-door scenes or locations such as factory canteens. "We give them some entertainment," he says of his factory visits, "and then use the people in one of our scenes."

Blakeley, his cameramen and actors are also familiar to patrons of Manchester ballrooms. One of these holds 4,000 dancers who have found themselves as extras in the films. "We give them lucky spot prizes as high as £250," Blakeley says. "The audience loves it and we get our shots."

The same people, Blakeley believes, are among the patrons of his films. "They're the people who keep the cinemas going," he declares. "They go once a week, no matter what happens. To them it's a religion."

And John Blakeley, whatever the London critics say, is going to give them what he's sure they want. One thing is certain, it won't be anything la-di-dah. THE END

Deep-sea drama that brings you fish

by *ERIC BENNETT*

For the trawlermen, nearly every trip has its thrills and surprises—the common cod can be an odd, elusive creature. In this second part of his sea-to-shop survey, Eric Bennett gives the trawlermen's angle on our fish supplies

Skipper John Crewdson had his strangest experience off Bear Island

HE WAS TALL, SLIM, young, with a pleasant smiling face. He was dressed in a beautifully-cut lounge suit and highly polished town shoes. As he stepped into the small bar to order a drink for his attractive and smartly-dressed wife, he might have been placed as a successful business executive or a super salesman. Or as anything but a fisherman.

But this was in Hull and my companion said: "You must meet Jack Leighton. He is one of our top skippers."

It was difficult to imagine that this soft-voiced man who looked as if he had done nothing more exciting than drive a smart bargain in an office would, within a few days, be on the bridge of his trawler taking her through the icy waters of the White Sea.

Up there inside the Arctic Circle Leighton and his crew can meet with a lot of things besides fish. There's the darkness, the gales, the moving ice—"though we can't usually see icebergs for the fog which surrounds them!" And there is the odd sort of experience met by Albert Cornish on a recent trip.

Jet-planes Swooped Down

Cornish, who is another of the top-flight men and skipper of the *Kingston Sardius*, had given the rest of the fishing fleet the slip and was nosing quietly along off the Murmansk coast of Northern Russia. There was not a ship in sight when at last he shot his trawls and began fishing. The next thing Cornish knew was that he was in the middle of a battle.

The sky was filled suddenly with more than 200 jet-planes. They swooped down across the *Kingston Sardius* and dropped parachute flares as markers for bombs. As they attacked, there came answering volleys of rockets, fired from rocket guns mounted on the grey warships which had swiftly and silently filled the surrounding sea. The Russian fleet and air force were staging combined air-sea manoeuvres.

Cornish crossed his fingers and went on fishing. He knew that it was only a mock battle, but with so much stuff flying about, anything might happen. He admits he was scared, but he tried to concentrate on cod.

Then, steaming through the battle towards the fishing ground on which Cornish was working, came other British trawlers. They had spotted Cornish and knew that where he was fish were likely to be. But the new arrivals were too much for the Russians. Out came a M.T.B. and ordered all the trawlers out of the the area. Albert Cornish hauled in his trawls and went.

The Trawler That Survived

Back in Hull, with the comfort of a drink and a roaring fire, it just becomes another good tale for the saloon bar. Not that these skippers talk much about the sea. Billy Hornby, for instance, will talk for hours without saying a lot about the *Kingston Pearl*.

After all, she was just another trawler. He took her out and brought her back.

On the way back he ran into a spot of heavy sea off the Norwegian coast. Huge waves crashed into the trawler and crippled her. A steel plate, stripped off like paper, crushed a trimmer to death. A deck-hand was swept overboard.

The engines were put out of action, the radio was smashed, the smokestack was buckled and bent in two, and there was three feet of water in the chart room. Billy Hornby put out a sea anchor and rode the storm for forty-eight hours. Then the men brought their bedding out on to the forecastle and burnt it as a distress signal.

The signal was seen by a sister trawler, the *Kingston Onyx*, which radioed a distress message. A tug came out and towed the *Kingston Pearl* into Trondheim. Quick repairs were made. The top of the funnel was cut off. Steam was raised again, and Billy Hornby brought the *Kingston Pearl*, and her catch, back to Hull.

These skippers, apart from the hazards of the game, are responsible for finding the fish by their skill and experience. They are paid by results, and they certainly earn their money.

Now in Hull they whisper respectfully: "These top skippers are £10,000 a year men." Allowing for the fact that in the fishing industry, as in every other business, everyone says that the other chap is making the money, it is certainly true that in some years the best skippers have been making more than the Prime Minister.

And they do it mainly on cod. The very name of cod arouses burning emotions in the housewife's breast, and there are some who believe that after fish price controls are removed on April 15, the cod will retire gracefully to the bottom of the sea and that soles, large plaice, halibut and turbot will spring in masses from the foam and land on the fishmongers' slabs.

The fact is that cod is, and always has been, the staple fish of Britain. Nearly half the fish that is landed in this country is cod.

Dragged Along The Seabed

The wet fish that reach the fishmonger are of two kinds. The pelagic or deep sea fish are those caught in drift nets, and consist mainly of herring, sprats, pilchards and a few other varieties. All the rest are demersal, which live on the bottom of the sea.

These are caught in trawls, which are weighted bag nets shaped roughly like purses with the mouth kept open by beams. They are dragged along the seabed and are hauled in by steam winches.

When a skipper shoots his trawls he has to take what comes up in them. Of course, if he is on the rapidly diminishing haddock grounds in the North Sea he will expect haddock. In the Arctic he may get a good haul of plaice, but it will be mostly cod.

Figures for landings over a large period of 1949 show the comparative density of the most popular fish: they also indicate how the prices will run when controls are lifted: cod, 6,236,192 cwt.; haddock, 1,330,034; plaice, 561,682; sole, 57,148. In the same period 1,545,863 cwt. of herring were landed, but it was a very poor year for herring.

Our biggest and most modern fleet of trawlers equipped for fishing distant waters sails from Hull. These ships fish all the year round, and their grounds range from the White Sea to the Arctic waters off Bear Island and Spitzbergen, from the Norwegian coast to Iceland, Greenland and the Newfoundland banks.

They are big trawlers, ranging from 350 to 720 tons, and the modern ones cost about £130,000 apiece. The newer ships are fitted with every modern navigational and fishing device: radar, radio-telephony, direction finders, and two types of echo sounders. Crew accommodation is luxurious compared with the quarters on old type trawlers. There are even drying rooms for wet clothes rigged inside the funnel.

In spite of all the scientific equipment, it is still the skipper's knowledge and instinct which leads him to the right fishing grounds at the right time—and even then he can never be certain of his luck. For the cod is a mysterious creature and many of its habits are unexplained. British scientists are now trying to solve the problem of why large concentrations of cod turn up in the Bear Island area, and hang about there just doing nothing.

It would seem to depend upon patches of warmer water there. But skipper John Crewdson, fishing from Fleetwood, had his strangest cold water experience off Bear Island two years ago.

The water was beginning to freeze when he started to haul in his trawl. The trawl broke through the ice and then shot all the fish straight out on to the frozen surface like a fishmonger emptying them on to a slab. "I've been fishing for thirty-four years, the last twenty-five of them as skipper, and I have never seen a sight like that before," he told me.

Skipper Crewdson, now commanding the *Southella* out of Hull, has some air-sea memories to match Skipper Cornish's Russian sea battle: "In the first World War I was an apprentice in the trawler *Elf* and we were fishing in Red Bay, Northern Island. Suddenly over our heads appeared an airship—a dirigible.

"We thought of zeppelins until we realized with relief that it was one of ours. The airship came lower and lower and lower and began to circle over us.

"'What do you want?' bellowed our skipper. 'Fish, of course,' came the answer. They lowered a rope, we put a kit of fish on the end of it, and off went the airship, happily hauling in."

The distant water trawlers are usually away a month. In that time the skipper has to decide how much steaming he can do and how much fishing. He may find one ground blank, and then have to calculate quickly how much time he can spare to get to the next likely spot.

Or he may be getting so many fish that he has to stop trawling and clean ship to make room for the catch. As the cod are caught they are gutted and stored on ice below decks.

With one eye to the preservation of his catch in good condition, another to his fuel and stores, and an ear to the market, the skipper must then decide when to cut for home.

From Trawler To Taxi

When the trawler docks, the crew do not have to unload, like the driftermen. The "bobbers" do that. For the skipper and his crew the taxis are already waiting at the quayside. There is a quick conference with the owner, a check on the catch, and then away in the cab for the relief of a spell ashore—though that spell may be only thirty hours and will not be longer than three days.

But the important thing is the price the catch makes. The skipper and the mate are on a share of the net profit: the crew are paid poundage on the gross price.

Full complement of an ocean-going trawler is about twenty-five. Besides the skipper and the mate, the basic crew consists of the boatswain, third hand, deck hand, cook, wireless operator, first and second engineers and two trimmers—plus a dozen to fifteen spare hands.

Basic wage of a deck or spare hand is 16s. 3d a day, which is usually collected every week by his wife while he is at sea. When a catch is sold every man gets 12s. in every £100 of the gross price. So a good haul worth £10,000 gives every man £60 for his month's work on top of his basic £5 13s. 9d.

After the crew has been paid poundage money, the expenses of the voyage—fuel, stores, ice, maintenance of instruments—are deducted and the net value of the haul is reached. This is divided into fourteen shares, of which the skipper gets one and three-eighths, the mate one, and the owner the rest.

It sounds all right when the market prices are high, but there can be a slump. Once 2,200 stones of fish were sold for £166.

Half the cod landed in England comes to Hull, and three-quarters of every Hull landing is cod. About ten per cent of the rest are "flats"—plaice, halibut, brill—and the rest is odd stuff such as saithe or coalfish, which is known as coley in the north and is one of those things that turn up under the name of "rock salmon" in the fried fish-shops of the south.

At Hull, unlike most of the ports, the fish is sold by Dutch auction, starting with top prices and coming down until a buyer bids. It is sold in "kits" of ten stone, and under control the maximum quayside price has been 6s. 4d. a stone for headless cod. This fish is sold to retailers at 8s. 9d. a stone, and the public pay from 10d. to 11½d. a pound. This gives the fishmonger about fifty per cent profit—if he can sell all the fish he has ordered.

Fishermen complain that under control, when prices at the dock fell below minimum the benefit was not passed on to the public. They believe that the competition of a free market will stop that.

Argument About Heads

During the war, in order to increase the size of landings, all cod caught were beheaded in the trawler before being packed away in ice. Now there is bitter controversy as to whether this custom should continue. Old hands say that the cod do not keep so well without heads: scientific tests have proved inconclusive. But it is certain that you have a better chance of knowing how fresh your cod is if you can look it in the eye. There is little doubt that heads will win in this argument.

Another prewar custom that will return is the sorting of fish. Under control, all sizes were dumped in the kits. Soon merchants will be able to buy large cod, sprags (or mediums) and codling according to the taste of their customers.

There will probably be an immediate decline in cod prices after control is removed, but if quayside prices can be kept above 4d. a pound, distant water trawling can still be made to pay—though that figure is a rock-bottom estimate.

One thing the distant water trawlermen fear is the competition of the "Scrubs," as they call the Icelanders. Iceland has a modern fishing fleet and, now that its contract to supply Germany with fish is finished, it is landing its catches at British ports.

The arrival of a large Icelander with a heavy load of cod and Icelandic plaice at Hull, Grimsby or Fleetwood can have the effect of overloading the market and bringing a sharp drop in prices. Owners, skippers and fishermen of all kinds, who feel that the fishing industry is facing a lean time, bitterly resent this competition.

Baiting The Housewife

For the cod market is a home market and it needs quick day-to-day sales. The few exports of salted and dried cod to Southern Europe have dwindled since war began, and deep-sea trawling depends upon attracting the housewife to the wet slab or the fried counter.

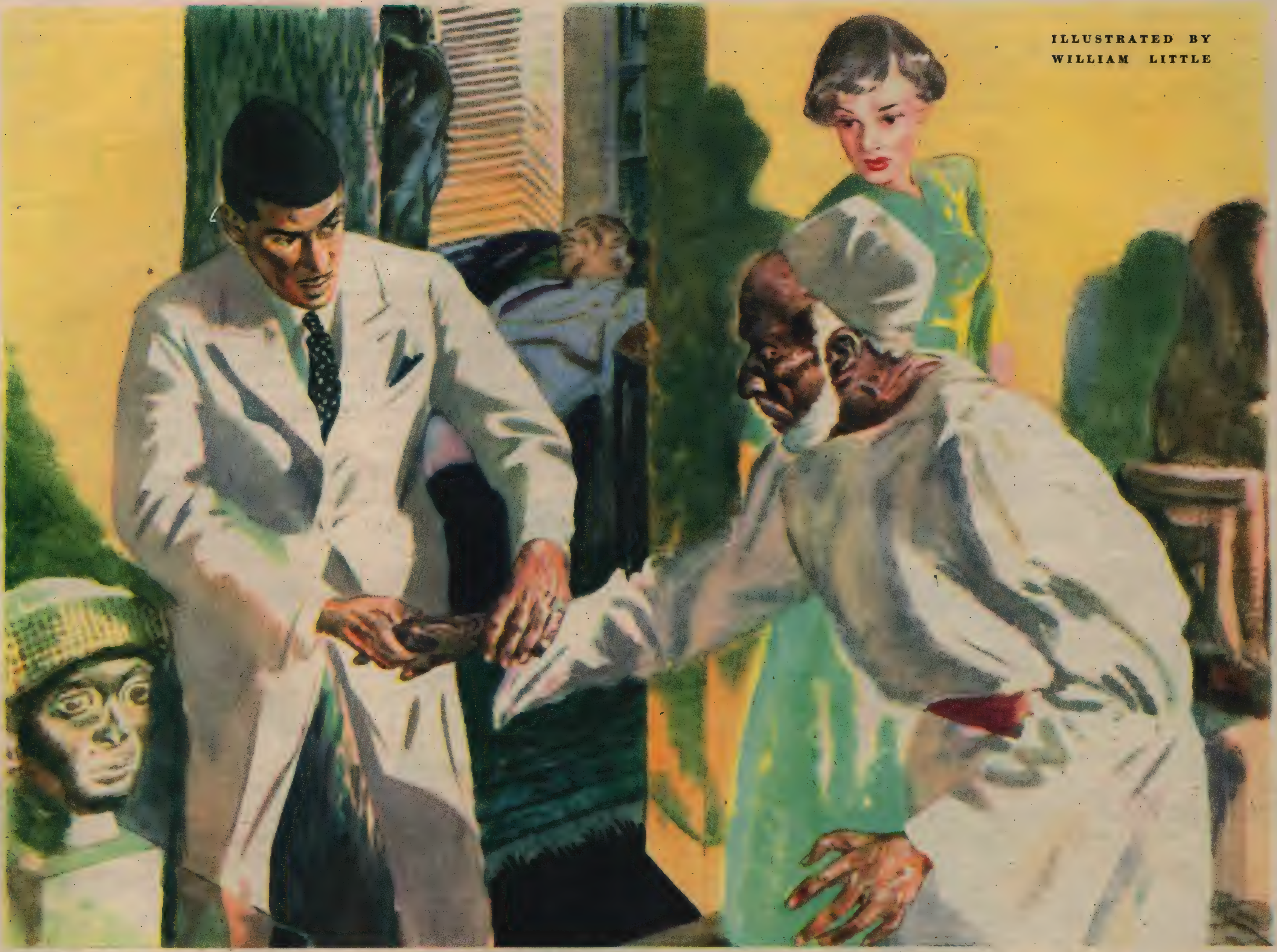
Cod, which was the prime favourite of the Victorian dinner table, has become unpopular not because of a change of taste, but because during the war the lack of variety in other foods forced many to a surfeit of it.

It was a Hull trawler owner who told me: "A writer said recently that the removal of controls would mean an end to the eternal cod. I tell you, if there is an end to the eternal cod, there is an end to the eternal fishing industry."

In a further article, Eric Bennett will describe the "poaching" that goes on in fishing grounds

14
8½
16½
6½
3
11
PLAICE
MACKEREL
TROUT
FRESH TROUT
SPECIAL

Housewife's choice. Soon she may have a wider pick. Cod prices may go down without hurting trawlermen



ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Chafik reached for Joseph's arm, and exposed the scratched wrist. "It is fresh," he said. Joseph said quickly: "Shah was playful this morning"

The cat had one master

. . . and both cat and master lay dead. Here was a pattern, thought Chafik, a mad pattern

by CHARLES B. CHILD

THE FURNACE SUN of Baghdad, filtered by the screens of fresh camel's-thorn that covered the windows of Inspector Chafik's office in the Criminal Investigation Department on Al-Rashid Street, made a speckled green pattern over his desk, the filing cabinets against the walls, and the woman who sat in the visitors' chair. When the woman moved to take a proffered cigarette her face emerged from the shadows. There was fear in her dark eyes.

Chafik said softly: "Atesian, Helen. Maiden name, Duncan. Race, Scottish-Armenian. Married in 1944. . . . Your husband, Leon, is a distant cousin on your mother's side and twenty years your senior. You have one son, named David, born in 1945. And three days ago you left your husband."

Helen Atesian's lovely face paled. "You know everything."

Inspector Chafik was shocked. "That should be said only of God. My records are after the event, madame. Little things come to me, threads that I loom as a weaver a carpet. When you were announced I had but to turn to my index. The ink was hardly dry on a recent cross-reference."

"What was this cross-reference?"

"It was a name. Ashford, Peter. Nationality, British. Date of arrival in Baghdad, last Tuesday. He is registered at the Regent Hotel. You were seen in his company and the fact was noted on his card. I beg forgiveness, but my profession spawns dossiers."

She said dully: "He is my lover."

"Madame!" Inspector Chafik covered his ears.

"He *was* my lover," she corrected, and added simply: "My son has his fair hair. We met in the war. He was with the British at Abadan, and I lived in Basra. We were very young. So much in love. Peter was sent away. He wanted to marry me before he left, but there were wartime restrictions."

Helen Atesian's hand shook, spilling ash from her cigarette. Chafik studied her hands, slender, almost fragile, yet strong.

She said: "When I knew about the child, I wrote to him. The letter was returned. Later I learned that he was missing in action, and might even have been killed."

She paused for a moment, and continued: "You know how it is with the families of our community. There is too much pride. If I had told my parents, who are old, it might have killed them. And I had to think of the child. I went to my cousin Leon, who has always loved me. He offered marriage."

"You have been happy?" the inspector asked.

"He has been kind, but it has been difficult because of his sister."

Chafik remembered his records and interrupted: "This sister is a widow. Married name, Chauvian. She kept house for her brother until he married. Then she left. You should forgive her, madame. Timber cut green often warps, and it is so with unseasoned widowhood."

Helen Atesian said mildly: "She is possessive about Leon. I think she would have hated me even if there had not been the child. . . . But that isn't important, Inspector. The problem is Peter and my husband."

"But I see no problem. Surely this one who has come back must be sent away."

"It is not so simple." The low, rich voice quavered, then found strength as she said: "Peter was badly wounded and taken prisoner. When he was liberated they sent him to England. They kept him in hospital there a long time. There are still moments when he remembers nothing." She made no attempt to hide her anguish.

Chafik said: "But why should the

Englishman show violence toward the man who has cared for you and the child? A blackout does not necessarily mean insanity."

There was a discreet knock on the door and a tall, gaunt police sergeant entered. He carried a folder to which was clipped a blue form. Chafik looked up irritably.

"I told you I was not to be disturbed, Abdullah."

"Sir, this is a matter of pressing importance." Sergeant Abdullah stubbornly put the folder on the desk and went out.

The inspector read the report. He heard Helen Atesian saying: "Peter was liberated before our child was born. He wrote to me then—I didn't know. My husband——"

Then he interrupted harshly: "I advise you to end this interview."

"There is little more. When Peter came to Baghdad to find me, my husband confessed. He had intercepted Peter's letters. He is full of remorse, but I left him. I had to. And foolishly, I told Peter. He became violent and threatened——"

"Enough!" Chafik himself was violent. "This report came over the teletype five minutes ago. Your husband is dead. He was found shot. A witness saw a man leave the house, a man with fair hair, tall, very thin. You recognize the description, madame?"

The horror on the woman's face needed no explanation.

THEY had found the body of Leon Atesian huddled in the library of his house. He had been shot in the right temple at such close range that the skin was scorched by the blast. There was no disorder in the room; no gun had been found.

The witness was the butler, a very old man named Joseph, who had been a retainer of the dead man's father. Joseph had a brown, wrinkled face, like lava hardened in a mould.

He said he had been sent into the city to market. The heat was trying and he returned early. He saw a man leaving the house and could identify him as Ashford. He knew the foreigner; he had kept watch on him and seen his illicit meetings with the woman. "My master should have beaten her," he growled.

Chafik said sharply: "Enough!" He made an apologetic gesture toward Helen Atesian, whose quietness contrasted with the uncontrolled grief of the other woman, who paced the floor, clasped hands rising and falling in anguish.

She was Madame Chauvian, the dead man's sister. When she looked at her sister-in-law, as she often did, her lips tightened and her dull eyes became oddly, coldly bright.

She said she had been called to the house by Joseph when he had discovered the body. She lived near by, and it had only taken her a few minutes to arrive, but much longer to recover from shock and notify the police.

Joseph said suddenly: "The foreigner killed because of the woman. I shall answer him." His hand came up to grasp an invisible dagger, and the sleeve of his gown fell back, revealing a long, raking scratch on his wrist.

Chafik said: "How far were you from the foreigner when he left the house?"

"Three steps. No more."

"Then he saw you?"

"He saw nothing. His look was blank, like death."

The inspector turned to Helen Atesian, who released an audible breath. She sat on the edge of the chair, very still, tense, silent; but the pale oval of her face reflected her realization that everything she had told Chafik made damning evidence against her lover.

"She weighs somewhere between nine pounds and eighteen pounds three ounces"

Inspector Chafik abruptly terminated the interview and went into the library to view the body.

The library was a handsome room, exquisitely furnished as was all the house. Unlike the usual ultra-modern homes of the wealthy Iraqis, Atesian's was a museum of fine antiques; he had been a man of impeccable taste, a dealer in rare books and an expert in Middle East bibliography.

The man who had died among his most treasured possessions was oddly decorous in the violence of death. He had been a grey-haired gentleman of middle age, carefully preserved and groomed. The bloodied head was flung back against an antimacassar of fine old brocade in an attitude of rest, a mockery enhanced by the ceiling fan which directed cooling air on the now cold body.

Chafik, who had frugal ways, switched off the fan and said to his assistant, mahogany-faced Sergeant Abdullah, who had conducted a preliminary investigation: "This is odd. The body has not been disarranged."

"Sir?"

"The sister would appear to be passionately grieved. I would expect her, seeing the corpse of one she loved, to throw herself upon it, clasp it, cherish it, become bloodied by it. Yet——" Chafik shrugged.

He looked at the occasional table placed beside Atesian's chair. Here his interest was held. He said: "Abdullah, what do you see?"

"A table, sir. On it, a half-empty bottle and a glass. An ashtray and the stub of one cigarette. Deceased was in repose when shot."

Chafik mused: "Vintage champagne. The glass is the finest crystal, a museum piece." He flicked it with a manicured nail and listened to the bell-like ring. "The cigarette was specially blended," he continued, sniffing the stub. "Observe Atesian's initials stamped on it; note he smoked only one with his champagne; that he drank neither too much nor too little."

The inspector bowed in the direction of the corpse.

"But there are inconsistencies," he went on. "Does a man who loves books repose himself without one? And why is the bottle pushed to the back of the table? Not at all convenient for a man sitting at ease."

Abdullah said: "Perhaps he only sat down with the final glass."

"Vintage champagne is not taken standing." Chafik backed to the door and continued: "I am now in the position of entering this room and the isolated bottle is the first thing that catches the eye. Yet the space in front of it has an air of emptiness. I am puzzled."

He thought for a while, and said: "You will make a note of it. Now what else have you found?"

"Very little, sir. The room is undisturbed, therefore robbery was not the motive. It would appear the killer entered silently, approached the chair in a crouching position to satisfy himself the victim slept, then shot him and departed."

"You have not explained how the killer entered. You forget Joseph was not here to open the door. Perhaps the killer was so familiar to Atesian that he had no reason to be on the alert."

Abdullah was silent.

"Observe," said Chafik suddenly, and indicated a satin-lined basket which was hidden behind a sofa. Kneeling to examine the basket, he found some silky blue hairs. He rose, looked at the expressionless sergeant, and left the room.

In the entrance hall, he asked the butler: "Where is your master's cat?"

"I have not seen it," said Joseph, and reminded of his duties, he added: "I must find Shah. There is no one to love it, now my master is gone. The woman hates it."

Helen Atesian broke her long silence. "I do not hate the cat. It hates me. It is a blue Persian, a breed which gives affection to one person only. Even Joseph could not touch it."

"Which explains this." Chafik suddenly reached for the old man's arm, turned up the wrist to expose the scratch he had previously noted. "It is fresh."

"Shah was playful this morning," said Joseph.

The inspector dismissed him, then said to Helen Atesian: "Your husband was devoted to the animal?"

"Shah is beautiful, and Leon loved all things beautiful."

"How very obvious!" Chafik looked at her with admiration.

Recovering himself, he gave orders for his men to hunt for the cat. "It may be in the garden," he suggested.

They were interrupted by Abdullah. "Sir, they bring the Englishman."

"Ask him to enter."

PETER ASHFORD was very tall, very thin and pale. His unruly fair hair and bewildered grey eyes made him look younger than his years.

Helen Atesian went to him with outstretched hands. He shook his head to stop her. Turning to Inspector Chafik, his mouth hardened and he became watchful. "All right. Let's have it," he said.

The woman said urgently: "Peter, don't talk! I know you didn't——"

The suddenly raised voice of her sister-in-law drowned out the rest. "Shameless!" shouted Madame Chauvian. "My brother's body not yet in its grave and you flaunt love for his murderer. You whom Leon took with child. Another's child! I begged him, warned him not to take in marriage a loose woman—adultress——"

Her eyes were brilliant. The angular body was rigid.

Chafik said sternly: "My ears are closed to accusations, madame. I am sympathetic to grief, but not to hatred."

The inspector ordered the woman to another room while he interviewed Ashford.

The Englishman said truculently to Chafik: "She doesn't know anything. Leave her out of this——"

The inspector answered in precise English: "I shall be pleased to cooperate, Mr. Ashford." He offered a cigarette, waved back the police guard and found a chair for the witness. "You are free to communicate with your consulate," he said.

Ashford shook his head. "I don't want consulate protection."

"You know what happened?" the inspector asked.

The Englishman said sombrely: "Yes." After a few moments, he went on disjointedly: "Of course, you know about Helen—us—what the war did. I couldn't forget Helen. It's been hell waiting to get back, wondering if she were waiting, too, or maybe not, all these years. Not hearing from her, not getting any answers to my letters. They kept me in that damned hospital a couple of years; when I got out I had to make money so I could come here and find Helen. I did. I learned the truth about everything."

His hand shook as he stubbed out the cigarette. He shrugged his thin shoulders and went on: "We were in

Continued on page 36

How I learned to live with diabetes

by *BERNARD O'DONNELL*

I was in despair and scared of the needle, but I stuck to my diet. Now I do my own gardening and travel without worry. I never felt better

ONE DAY, NOT LONG AGO, I felt tired almost to the point of weakness. A strange thirst consumed me. My mouth and throat seemed harshly dry and pints of water did nothing to help. Since I had just finished a hard grind on a book I was writing, I felt sure I must simply be a bit run down.

"What I need," I told my wife, "is a tonic." I went to the doctor.

"Unquenchable thirst?" he said. "You appear to be getting rather thin, too, by the way your clothes hang on you."

"That's probably due to the extra gardening I've done lately," I said.

The doctor nodded. "Any frequency?"

I had to admit that this was a nuisance which had recently developed. He gave me a test.

"Too much sugar," he told me. "I'm afraid you've got diabetes." I couldn't have felt worse if I'd been sentenced to death. I imagined a restriction of diet far worse than rationing. I had a nightmare of daily sessions with a hypodermic needle.

The attitude of my friends didn't help. "Diabetes?" one of them commented. "That's pretty bad. It will certainly cramp your style."

Clinic Surprised Me

In a condition bordering on despair I paid my first visit to the Diabetic Clinic at King's College Hospital at Denmark Hill, London. I went there half expecting to find it full of decrepit humans, tottering about on their last legs, completely devoid of hope. I was pleasantly surprised to find, instead, a group of men, women and teen-agers sitting around reading and laughing and even joking. They came from all classes and professions. They were short and tall, thin and fat. Nothing in their appearance suggested that they were ill.

The room was large, airy and spotlessly clean. There were a couple of cubicles on one side. Racks of test tubes lined a bench at which two white-coated girls made the inevitable tests. There was a complete absence of self-consciousness about the way members of both sexes produced their little bottles of "specimens" and handed them over to the nurse, who then carefully took the weight of each patient.

On the wall there was a tablet announcing that the clinic had been founded by the late H. G. Wells—himself a sufferer from diabetes. This gave me considerable comfort. I thought: "*He* did not die from the disease, anyway."

I was weighed. I had a blood test. Then I sat on one of the forms waiting my turn with the doctor. A couple of elderly women knitted and gossiped beside me.

A sister called out a man's name. There was no reply. The two women looked at one another and giggled. "He's like Harvey the rabbit," one remarked. "He just isn't here."

This atmosphere was reassuring. I heard other patients calmly discussing their morning "jabs" with the needle. I thought: "I'm in the right hands. The rest is up to me."

That is the essence of the treatment. It *is* up to the patient. It is his pancreas that has let him down and it will be his body and mind that will suffer if he does not co-operate.

I saw the doctor. "We'll put you on a fortnight's diet and see how you get on," he said. I was surprised and relieved that he had not mentioned the hypodermic and insulin.

How It All Starts

Diabetes is a disease which comes from a breakdown in the pancreas. The sugar and starch taken in certain foods are not properly burned up—and you are ill.

The first object of treatment is to regulate the diet so that a balanced amount of carbohydrates (sugar), proteins and fats keep the human machine running at a normal rate.

For instance, I was given a simple diet sheet, listing the foods I could eat in plenty and those I could take only in certain quantities. I was given a small metal measure with which to estimate the proper amount of bread per portion. This amount represented about ten grams of carbohydrates. A potato as large as a hen's egg represented another portion. So did a cup of milk.

I was permitted twelve portions per day. My wife was invited to attend a special demonstration. She was shown how—by measuring out certain quantities of flour or rice or tapioca—to make special milk puddings, dumplings or a tasty lemon-flavoured cake, with saccharin for sweetening. I even had a Christmas pudding made from a special recipe.

On an early visit to the clinic I sat near a young man who had been a diabetic since he was fourteen. "Nobody at the office knows," he confided. "Furthermore, I eat out at a restaurant every day."

"But how," I asked, "do you manage to get just the right things without exceeding the limit of your diet?

"I steer clear of potatoes and bread for the midday meal," he explained. "I have meat and greens and scarlet runners when they are in. I have fish either boiled or grilled. In the

Using a measure, O'Donnell cuts a portion of bread. Potato is also measured but tomatoes, meat and butter he eats as he likes

summer there are plenty of salads. As we can have lettuce and tomatoes and onions—no beetroot, though—I can spread myself a bit and finish off with a bit of bread and cheese."

I went home feeling not nearly so depressed. Later, when I got into the swing of minding my diet, I found that I was having ample food. Beyond a healthy appetite at meal times I felt no real pangs of hunger. In addition, there was a credit side to my dietary.

As a diabetic, for example, I have been allowed three rations of meat per week, twelve ounces of cheese, eighteen ounces of butter or margarine and seven pints of milk.

I stuck to my diet faithfully. After the first day of taking only my twelve portions the ceaseless, unquenchable thirst which had plagued me vanished completely. On the second day of dieting I decided I would go to the local cinema.

I selected a strategic seat at the end of a row so that I could pop out quickly in an emergency. This time there was no call. I sat through the entire performance without discomfort. I felt better already.

But, when I again visited the clinic, it was found that I had lost two pounds in weight. "That won't do," the doctor said. "The sugar is considerably less, but you aren't getting enough to eat. I'll increase the number of portions from twelve to sixteen and see how you get on with insulin."

He handed me over to a nurse for instruction in the art of injection. "It's really quite simple," she said, and, after explaining what to do, she let me experiment, myself, at filling the hypodermic with the precise amount of insulin prescribed.

Then she said: "If you like we can arrange for the district nurse to come each day to give you the injection. It is better, though, for a patient to give it himself. Why not try one without any insulin?"

With a bravado I was far from feeling I took the syringe, pinched up a bit of flesh on my thigh and pushed the needle home. I felt absolutely nothing and said so.

"Anticipation," the nurse smiled, "is always the worst part."

From that day I have performed my morning "jab" as an easy routine. I have learned that by giving a gentle prick with the point of the needle one can feel whether or not it is on one of the surface nerves. If it is, I move the needle. Now it is always painless.

A fortnight after being put on insulin and the extra four portions I again went to the clinic. I was on top of the world. I felt no lethargy or weakness as I had done before. And *I had gained four pounds twelve ounces.*

Since then I have never looked back. There has been no return of my unpleasant early symptoms. Sticking to my diet and my daily shot of insulin, I have continued to gain weight regularly. The sugar is leaving my system. I feel both well and happy. I am still a diabetic, but I can honestly say that I have never felt better in my life.

Naturally, I would be even happier if I had no complaint at all. I am not trying to minimize the seriousness of diabetes. It *is* a serious ailment. If neglected it can become dangerous. It is insidious; it creeps up on a person before he notices the danger signals: the thirst and loss of weight, together with that depressing feeling of lassitude and weakness. It can take a grim hold before a person realizes what is wrong.

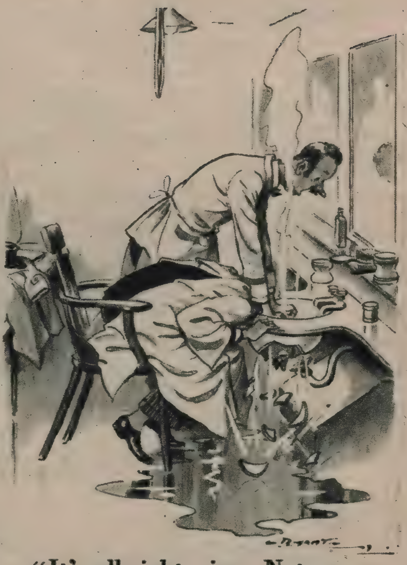
It is a sad truth that, because of ignorance of the symptoms, thousands of men, women—and even children—are eating their way to diabetes. The young, like their elders, are not now being neglected. Homes for diabetic children are springing up through the country.

These are doing excellent work in teaching youngsters how to fit themselves into normal life. They are trained to mind their diets, to measure the amounts of food they do eat with clinical care and to lead lives that are nearly normal.

As for myself, I live a full and busy existence. I do my gardening. I travel without worry.

My advice to anyone having any or all of the symptoms I have mentioned is to check up at once with his doctor. Diet alone may stem the disease if taken in its early stages.

Whatever the verdict—insulin or not—stand by the treatment prescribed. Then there won't be anything to worry about. THE END



"It's all right, sir. Not your fault. The basin was cracked"

BANK MANAGER—SAFETY FIRST MAN

Continued from page 13

branches, they go next morning to a clearing house where all the banks meet daily. A balance is struck between what each banking concern owes the other, and a settlement made.

This is done daily for more than 5,000,000 banking accounts in England alone. Something like 500,000,000 cheques are handled every year. Each one passes through the hands of dozens of banking officials. Yet the whole set-up works as slickly as a penny-in-the-slot machine.

Lost Cheques In Stolen Mailbag

"Clearing" a cheque takes four days, and the money is not available to be drawn out before this because it may not reach us. We had a hitch early this year when our bank letter to head office was in a mailbag that was stolen.

The cheques were no use to the thief; they were stamped with the name of our branch. But I had to telephone or write to all my customers who had paid in that day. Three protested, wrongly, that the loss was the bank's liability. I told them that they would be debited the amount unless they got new cheques, and they soon agreed.

The most frequent cause of cheques not being cleared is the public's own mistakes. As usual, January this year brought its crop wrongly dated 1949. Reluctant payers frequently leave the date off altogether—perhaps accidentally. Drunks sometimes use "new" signatures we don't recognize.

One wild young man who banks with us lives just across the road. About once a month he comes home by taxi, very late. Last time it happened I saw him under the lamp post scribbling a cheque for the driver. When it came through to us, I noticed it was in pencil. He was practically asking to be cheated.

All bad writing invites fraud. At the least, it may keep us working late to balance our books because a clerk mistakes an untidy "5" for an "8," or a fancy "1" for a "7."

Accepting actual cash, we keep a sharp look-out for counterfeit stuff. We have a slotted piece of brass screwed to the counter for testing "snide." On one occasion when my cashier broke a dud half-crown in two and handed the pieces back, the indignant female shopkeeper who had brought in the morning's takings slung the bits at his head.

As a young clerk I once paid out on a stolen cheque. Originally it had been "crossed" in ink so that it could only be paid in through an account, not cashed. But the thief had erased the crossings with a chemical. Luckily I remembered the man's face. I picked him out at a police identity parade, and he was prosecuted and sent to prison.

Nowadays banks prefer customers to use cheques with a printed crossing. They are much more difficult to tamper with, and the customer can easily "open" one by writing "Pay cash" and his signature at the top.

There is no disgrace in having an overdraft at the bank. In fact, if we are willing to lend a man money, it proves we think him trustworthy.

There is some truth in a jibe a friend of mine recently quoted at me: "A bank is a place where you can borrow money provided you can prove you don't need it."

Some people who have to borrow for the first time in their lives enter my office trembling with nerves; one had to sign his name three times before he spelt it right. Another, who borrowed five hundred to set up a fish and chip shop, asked incredulously: "I can take it with me *now,* guvernor?" Bank managers may never accept gratuities, but he shoved a shilling into my hand. "For a drink, mate!" I took it.

All Part Of The Service

Aside from their main functions, banks do a host of odd jobs—dealing with customers' income tax problems, wills, passports, securities, insurance, shares, and foreign trade and travel. I often tell business men that I know that they consult me because my free advice is cheaper than a lawyer's.

Nothing a customer says to his bank manager is ever divulged—that is why, I have signed this with a pen-name and can give no hint of where I live. The only exception is when a judge in a criminal case orders a bank to produce evidence. Not even the income tax authorities may question us without first obtaining a judge's order. Unscrupulous people know this and take full advantage of it.

One customer of mine wanted a loan to buy an extensive property. I looked him in the eye and said: "*You* don't need to borrow."

"I daren't put down the cash in a lump," he admitted. "The income tax people would want to know where I got it!"

The darkest secrets in a bank are locked in the black metal "deed" boxes which we keep for people in our strong-room. The bank provides safekeeping for private papers and all kinds of valuables—a free service to customers. At this branch we have stored jewellery, furs, oil paintings and family silver. At the beginning of the war we were bunged out with boxes of valuables and had to refuse anything bulky.

£500 For £300—But No Takers

But we don't know what goes into some of the deed boxes, and officially we don't want to know. I am certain that in recent years many were bulging with black market profits—treasury notes.

When all Bank of England notes over £5 were called in, a customer offered me personally a £500 note for three hundred in ones. It was too "hot" for him to pay through the bank, but of course I did not take it.

My most startling request from a customer came only a few weeks ago. "One of those packing cases of mine in your strong-room is full of gold ingots," he said. I looked at him strangely, knowing he had only one ordinary deed box.

"I want you to get it out and send it to the Prime Minister," he went on. "It will pay for the dollar gap!"

His mental gap has since landed him in an asylum. That's what money does to some people. But to a bank manager it's just so much work. THE END

THE HUMAN MACHINE *by ROFFE THOMPSON*

It's later than you think!

THERE'S an old sundial that says bluntly, "It's later than you think." How true! After all, we do have only a certain amount of time at our disposal, and none of us knows just how much.

It's pure folly to delay doing whatever we intend to do. It's plain common sense to keep our account with life up to date. Yet few of us do. We mean to, of course. We never intend to let that miserable misunderstanding run on from year to year. We never really mean to keep that silly quarrel alive. It's just that mental and moral laziness overcome us. We shouldn't let it.

If there's anything you mean to put right, now's the time.

Twenty-year-old Brian Burn: last year he hitch-hiked 3,500 miles to North Africa, worked his passage home as ship's deckhand. Salary—a bob

20,000 miles by rule of thumb

by RONALD CLARK

Hitch-hiker Burn has thumbed a lift from a black maria, ridden with a millionaire. His advice: act like a gentleman and don't stand at bends

DURING THE PAST three years Brian Burn has travelled in a Dutch Black Maria, in an Italian hearse, and with a French lorry-driver who turned out to be a millionaire. Though he is still only twenty years old, he has reached page 13 of his passport and has collected nearly fifty passes, cachets and frontier-stamps on it. And his journeys—bed, board and fares all in—have cost him something like six shillings a day or roughly £8 8s. od. a month.

Brian, now collecting equipment, maps and visas for a journey to Spain, lives at Hendon, studies at the Regent Street Polytechnic, and is a fair representative of the new fraternity of the roads—the postwar hitch-hikers who will be seen any day during the holiday season on the main roads of Britain or the Continent.

They are tough young men or women, usually dressed in jacket, pullover and corduroys, and carrying the lightest possible rucksacks. They travel "by rule of thumb"; they condemn the bad manners which have begun to get hitch-hiking a bad name in parts of the Continent; and, during their stays at international youth hostels and their drives with lonely farmers or wealthy travellers, they see a good deal more than most people of the country they pass through.

Historically, the art of hitch-hiking began with the petrol engine; geographically, it began in America. Brian Burn, who has already chalked up some 10,000 miles hitching in this country and the same amount abroad, had his first real experience of it three years ago when he went on a 3,000-mile hitch through six countries. The whole journey took him six weeks and cost him less than £25.

Before that, he had served an apprenticeship on the London-to-the-Lakes route, the regular trade route of many veteran prewar hitch-hikers —"and the only route on which I've ever had a lift in a Rolls," he says.

"I was only seventeen on my first journey abroad, but I'd always wanted to travel, so I collected £25 and started off. The boat ticket from Newhaven to Dieppe was the only fare I had to pay on the journey down to Milan and back home via Holland. I wasn't allowed to work my passage or I'd have saved that, too."

That one experience of hitch-hiking whetted Brian's appetite for more, and when conscription took him to Chester in the R.A.F., hitching became his natural mode of travel on leave. Burn claims that he holds the R.A.F. record for getting home on leave in an hour from Chester to London—won when he hitched a lift on a plane which dropped him within a few hundred yards of his home at Hendon.

During his R.A.F. service he hitched a good many thousand miles, gaining, in effect, the freedom of the whole country, and picking up the refinements of the craft of travel without fares.

Thoroughly Bad Form

"You never stand at a bend," he points out. "You never stand on a hill, and whatever you do you never follow the example of some hitchers I've seen on the Continent who stand in the middle of the road, force a driver either to stop or commit manslaughter, and then curse him if he refuses to pick them up." Hitching should, in fact, be a gentlemanly business, carried out to a certain set of rules.

"Not as I saw it played once on the Dijon road," says Brian. "I was travelling on an open lorry along a straight bit of road with woods on either side. There was a man in the middle of the road and another by his side who looked as though he

Did you MACLEAN
your teeth today?

Of course I did!

MACLEANS
Peroxide Tooth Paste
makes teeth
WHITE

20,000 MILES BY RULE OF THUMB

Continued from previous page

had been injured. The driver, who was a decent type, slowed and stopped. As he pulled up, about a dozen fellows swarmed out of the woods and all over the vehicle; and over me."

That took place on Brian's second trip abroad, an ambitious affair which he carried out last year and which took him more than 3,500 miles through eleven countries and finally landed him in Tunis, whence he returned as a deckhand on a Panamanian ship whose captain paid him a shilling for the journey back to the Thames.

Lorry Driver In City Dress

It was on the way out on this journey that he successfully thumbed a lift on a rather broken-down lorry.

"There was a middle-aged man driving and a younger man by his side. They sat bolt upright and seemed to be dressed rather for the city than for driving a lorry. There was a young Frenchman at the back and he said: 'The old man's a millionaire.' You know what these Frenchmen are for stories, so I was sceptical.

"But when we stopped about midday the driver drew into a car park and invited us to lunch, and it wasn't a pull-up for carmen that we went to but the best restaurant in the town. He *was* a millionaire; he'd wanted to drive into Paris with his son and had just taken one of the lorries off his estate."

Some people are almost embarrassingly helpful—like the honeymoon couple who insisted that Brian came along, and the crowd of 200 in a South Italian town who insisted that they stop all the vehicles on the road until they found one going to his destination, 100 miles away.

Lectured For His Supper

Three Englishmen in a small car bursting with luggage took Brian across the Alps and down towards Italy. A 200-mile lift from Pisa in a vast sixty-foot Italian trailer, "something like an over-grown *Queen Mary*," helped him farther south. In Pisa, instead of singing for his supper, he lectured for it—to the students of the university who wanted to know about life in Britain.

One result of that journey—it included a trip through the Sicilian country of Guiliano the Bandit and a stay in the Foreign Legion hospital at Tabarka to recover from sunstroke — was a three-minute talk on the B.B.C. when he got back to Britain. "I got three guineas for it," says Brian. "It wasn't very much, but I had another four weeks before term started, so I used the money to pay for a boat ticket to France."

This time he chose Scandinavia: "And as I planned to go through Germany I took a Union Jack with me. I wasn't going to be mistaken for any so-and-so German." From the coast he roughly followed the path of Monty's Twenty-first Army Group up through France and Belgium into Holland. It was on a road in Holland that he thumbed the Black Maria.

"Two housebreakers and two coppers inside," he says. "And the coppers kindly warned me that no cars were allowed on the Dutch roads the following day, which was Sunday."

That failed to worry Burn. "I hitched a lift on a horse and cart which was going up to the German frontier," he explains.

The Control Commission was not very sympathetic towards young men hitching their way across Europe, and the most it would grant Brian was a twenty-four hour transit visa which would technically get him across the British Zone to the Danish frontier.

"They made me promise that I wouldn't get off the train in which I crossed the frontier," says Brian. Which was possibly one of the reasons why he crossed it on foot. "At Hanover I was dead lucky. I asked an R.T.O. who was pretty unhelpful, but up came a middle-aged sergeant with a row of ribbons who told me to hop on his lorry, took me out to an Army transit camp and fixed me up with a meal and bed and breakfast."

Showed The Flag

On the roads north of Hanover he had a shock. "Talk about hitch-hikers. There were hundreds of them, swarms of them. I've never seen anything like it. It was lucky I took my Union Jack. It helped with the Army lorries."

From the Danish frontier to Copenhagen, across the water to Sweden—"I found there was a ferry there with a purely nominal charge"—and up into Norway as far north as Lillehammer, was easy going after Germany.

Anyone can do it, says Brian. He estimates that he will soon be getting his thousandth lift. But it needs perseverance. Although about one car in every seven stopped during the easy days of wartime hitch-hiking, one in every dozen or one in every fifteen is a good average figure today. Some students of the business put it as high as one in twenty.

Ready To Rough It

The hitch-hiker must be prepared to live rough, although the system of youth hostels now operating throughout most of Western Europe takes the edge off tough living for an additional few shillings a day.

And he must, above all, abide by the rules. Treat the vehicle in which he is travelling as if it were his own. Avoid scattering cigarette ash over the floor. Have the courtesy to thank the man who gives him a lift. And it always helps to look clean and shaven. At rock bottom, believes Brian, it's mainly a matter of good manners.

The hitch Brian remembers most vividly is the 100-mile journey he made in a 1927 Austin across the Jutunheim mountains in Norway. The driver seemed to be in a hurry.

"We whipped round the corners of those narrow mountain roads like nobody's business. I soon noticed that the driver kept only one arm on the wheel. When I looked closer I saw that it was the only one he'd got." THE END

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

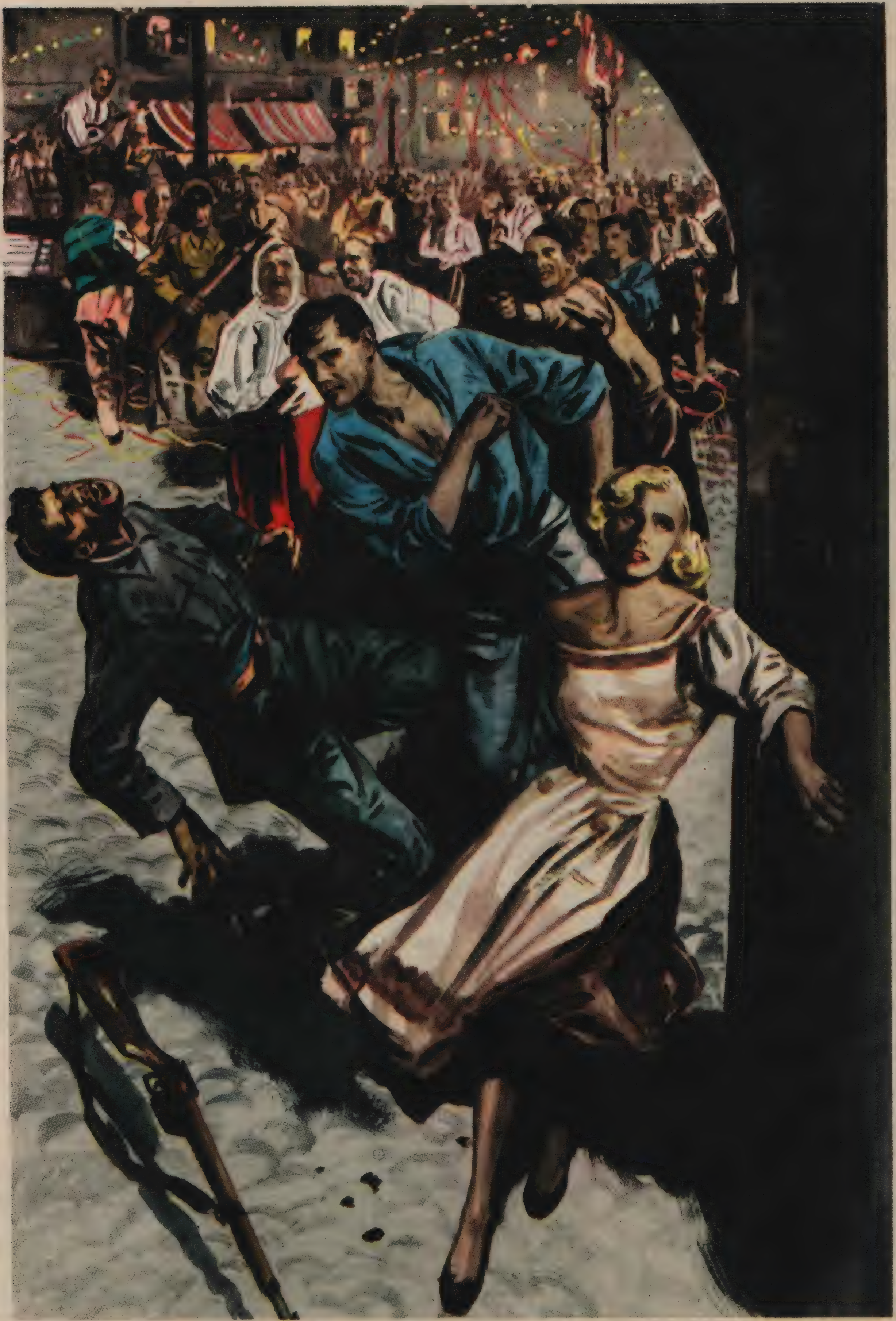
READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of John Bull's team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

A FOREST OF EYES

by VICTOR CANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDER OLIPHANT

Dancing in the pagan abandon of the carnival, Hudson and Franja could forget what lay ahead. Then came the rasping announcement



Hudson hit the guard, and he went down. They'd got to run for it now—if Franja could keep pace

His clothes limp and dripping from his swim in the dock, Hudson dragged himself on to the deserted pleasure boat, and locked himself in the toilet.

It was midnight. In the morning, the boat would be taking the crowds to Metilini for the carnival. It would also be taking Joseph, the spy, and Franja, and Hudson himself, to freedom. Once the boat was under way, Hudson would be safe. Until then, he had to stay put.

It was the end of an adventure that had started when he arrived in Jugoslavia with Raikes, a man he took to be a Board of Trade official. Raikes wasn't. He was a British agent, and his job was to organize the escape of an international spy from Dubrovnik.

When O.Z.N.A., the secret police, got wind of his mission, Raikes had gone underground on a nearby island. He had been betrayed by a servant girl, Yelitsa, and killed in a police raid.

Left on his own, Hudson decided to carry on the job. The spy, he discovered, was Joseph, a waiter at the hotel. Joseph had managed to cast suspicion on Colonel Grol, another guest at the hotel. And though Hudson was sorry about Grol (he liked the man), he understood that Joseph's trade demanded instant, unscrupulous defensive action.

It was this trait in Joseph's character that had brought Hudson himself in on the escape. Joseph had promised to take with him Franja Pazan, a girl who was in love with Hudson. But Hudson knew very well that at the first sign of danger, Joseph would drop her.

So, although free to leave the country legally, Hudson had jumped out of the train taking him to Belgrade, and set out for Gruz to board the pleasure boat which would take him to Metilini. There, Sandro, a boatman, and his son, Tulio, would sail them to Italy. Tulio had deserted his wife, Yelitsa, the girl who had betrayed Raikes.

Meanwhile, at police headquarters in Dubrovnik, Zarko, the police chief, and Lepovitch, the man from O.Z.N.A., were angrily trying to trace Hudson's movements. The countryside was being combed for him. The escape, they know, was a "mistake" that wouldn't be overlooked in Belgrade.

FINAL INSTALMENT

The Escape

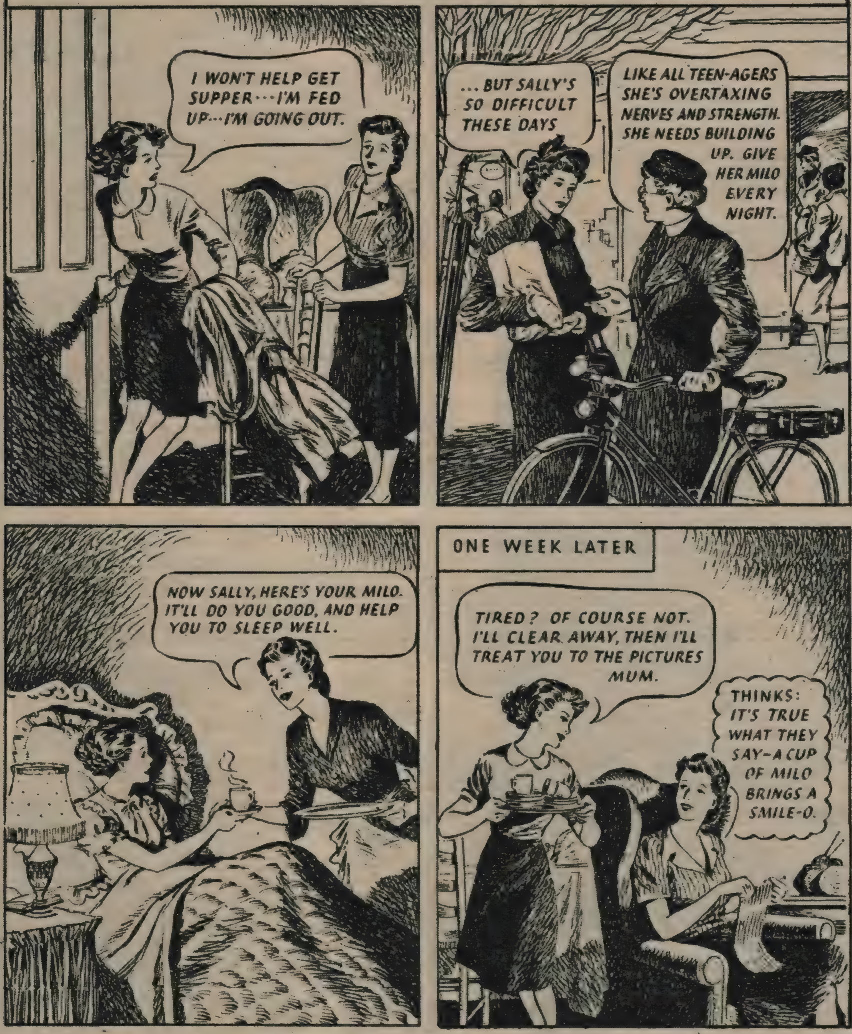
At eight o'clock the *Brac* was clear of Gruz bay and beginning to roll a little in the south-easterly swell which was taking her on the port beam and now and then raising small scuds of spray.

Franja, a light mackintosh over her dress as protection against the fresh morning breeze, sat on the after-promenade deck, in the lee of the bridge house, and watched the mainland sliding away at an angle. Every colour was immaculate, jewel-clean in the sharp sunlight.

The opaline sea, frayed with upthrown crystal fronds where the wind whipped the lip of the racing crests, spread away to the dark jade line of trees, pocked with the ivory and amber of houses and villas, that ringed the distant mainland.

Above the trees, powder yellow and downy grey, the rising foothills and thin fields reached up to the sharply edged scarps and peaks of the mountains, remote against the cold-blue distance of the sky. Detail was lost and only colour remained,

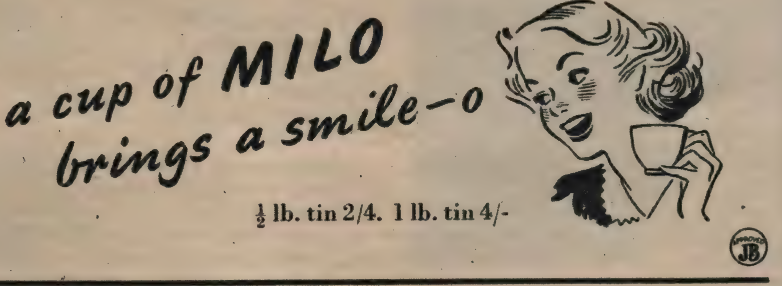
Trouble with a TEEN-AGER


I WON'T HELP GET SUPPER···I'M FED UP···I'M GOING OUT.
... BUT SALLY'S SO DIFFICULT THESE DAYS
LIKE ALL TEEN-AGERS SHE'S OVERTAXING NERVES AND STRENGTH. SHE NEEDS BUILDING UP. GIVE HER MILO EVERY NIGHT.
NOW SALLY, HERE'S YOUR MILO. IT'LL DO YOU GOOD, AND HELP YOU TO SLEEP WELL.
ONE WEEK LATER
TIRED? OF COURSE NOT. I'LL CLEAR AWAY, THEN I'LL TREAT YOU TO THE PICTURES MUM.
THINKS: IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY—A CUP OF MILO BRINGS A SMILE-O.

Why teen-agers need

Nestlé's MILO

Girls and boys in their teens are growing mentally, physically and emotionally. They need all your care. Start giving them Milo regularly. Its concentrated goodness will help to build them up, maintain their strength and increase their energy. Taken at night, it induces sound, refreshing sleep. You, too, would benefit from the nightly cup of Milo. Towards the end of winter one always feels a bit "down", and Milo will cheer you up. Get some at your grocer's or chemist's today.


a cup of MILO brings a smile-o

½ lb. tin 2/4. 1 lb. tin 4/-

B6

A FOREST OF EYES

Continued from previous page

and she was for a while sad with the thought that a country which she loved was forcing her from it.

The emotion in her was touched and heightened by the sound of a mandolin and an accordion played farther down the deck by a party of boys and girls who were singing an old folk song. The deck was crowded with excursionists, some like herself wrapped against the wind in raincoats, others, hardy and uncaring, in shorts and open-necked shirts. In the youth party, some of the girls were already lying on the deck, their shorts drawn up, arms and throats bare, shining with oil to catch the browning sun.

The boat was going on to Hvar after dropping the excursionists at Metilini, and would not be returning until midnight to pick them up.

It was a mixed crowd, swarming over the boat, packed on the decks, huddled for shelter in the well, amidships, crowding out the dining saloon, where she had managed to get coffee as they sailed; old folk, peasants going back to the islands after a visit to the mainland, townsfolk from Dubrovnik going to Metilini for the festival—and everywhere the young people, happy, shouting, calling, singing.

In this country, the young were happy, they worked and they sang, they were privileged, they travelled cheaply, they ate well. And in return they had only to believe and profess what they were taught in their schools and in their Tito youth clubs.

For youth it was an easy bargain. They began to sing a partisan song in praise of Tito, and Franja, looking back towards the after-end of the deck, at the rail above the stern, saw that Joseph, who had made no sign of recognition to her, was singing, too. He was leaning back, singing lustily with the rest of the passengers there.

For a moment she watched him, smiling. He wore an old pair of trousers, a norfolk shooting jacket, sandals, an open-necked shirt, and over his crisp hair a small grey beret.

She got up after a while and went down the companion-way. To sit in one place long was impossible. She went up to the high forward deck, meeting the full strength of the wind. There were fewer people on this deck and they were mostly country folk going back to their homes, roughly dressed, sturdy men and women, young peasant girls in long black dresses, their heads wrapped in scarves, coloured pompons of wool swinging at their bodice fronts. She sat down with her back to a large hamper, part of the luggage piled in the middle of the deck, and it was then that she saw Hudson.

At first she was uncertain.

He was lying a yard from her, resting on his right side, his face cradled against his arm, his body curled in the sun. Near him a group of women squatted, knitting. Other men lay about in the sun, in the shelter of the various pieces of luggage.

She looked at the curled length of the long body, at the creased blue shirt which was torn below the shoulder, at the stained grey trousers and shabby boots, and for a moment, despite the catch in her throat, the sudden racing of her heart, she felt she was mistaken. He might have been any rough worker, sleeping away the boredom of the trip.

She wanted it to be Hudson, not daring to hope that it was, but as she looked she knew there was no mistake. She sat there, watching the wind ruffle the loose folds of his shirt, seeing the unshaven line of his cheek.

He turned over slowly, blinking his eyes against the sudden glare of the sun, and then he saw her. He looked at her for a while, his face solemn, unmoving, as though she were a stranger. Then a smile creased his features and he slewed forward towards her, lying full-length, resting on his elbows.

"Surprised?"

At first she could only nod.

"Is Joseph aboard?" He gave her time, watching her.

"He's on board," she said. "But why are you here? Has anything gone wrong?" She tried to keep the happiness from her voice and succeeded in sounding hurried, a little impatient.

"Everything's all right. I changed my mind. I thought this was a better way out than that awful journey from Belgrade up through Ljubljana and Trieste."

It didn't sound like the truth, but she accepted it.

"You've cut your face badly."

"Yes. I don't want to advertise it too much, either. Have you had any breakfast?"

She nodded.

"There was an awful crowd in the saloon when I came through. I didn't want to risk it."

"The crowd should have cleared by now."

Hudson rose to his knees.

"I think I'll find a dark corner where I can have coffee and a biscuit. When we get to the island we should be able to get something more substantial. Stay here, I'll be back."

He was gone, and she sat, feeling the slow movement of the hamper, rolling with the ship. The desire to keep moving had left her and she was strangely at ease. For some reason he had come back, not because he had disliked a train journey, for he had told her that he was to fly from Belgrade. Perhaps there was some danger, something had gone wrong, but not even that could disquiet her now.

HUDSON found himself a seat in a corner of the saloon, where his cut face was turned from the other passengers. He was sure that the guard he had met must have seen the wound and anyone who was looking out for him would not miss it.

The waiter brought him a cup of tepid coffee and three hard biscuits shaped like tiny quoits, and he ate and drank quickly. In his hideaway he had been awakened by the sound of the first passengers coming aboard, and he had kept the door locked, until the steamship was under way.

Before he had come out he had tidied himself up in the outer compartment. His clothes had been almost dry and the fresh morning wind had taken the last of the damp from them.

When he had finished eating, he went back to Franja and lay alongside her in the sun. They said little, content just to lie and watch the long shapes of the coast islands pass them. Just after nine o'clock, the island of Metilini grew from a blur on the horizon to a long, grey score of mountain and rough olive groves against the pale sky.

The island reached away from a jumble of crags above Metilini town in a great sway-back of hills, running twenty miles to the north-east, its full length hidden from them by the encircling hills above the little bay into which the ship was heading.

The bay itself was a little half-circle, about three hundred yards across, bitten neatly out of the end of the island. The inner curve was lined with a wide, dusty quayside, lying back from which rose the ancient walls of Metilini town which had once been a Turkish fortress. A great arched doorway led into the town through the wall.

Franja and Hudson stood at the rail

as the steamboat swung into the bay, past little groups of moored rowing and fishing boats. Hudson watched a small crowd which moved on the quayside, waiting for the boat. Already from the rail, people were shouting and calling to one another.

The steamer backwatered to slacken speed and circled to draw into the landing quay. Hudson pointed to an echelon of pines that ran down from the hill above the town.

"I'll have to get ashore by myself. I've no ticket. Get hold of Joseph in the town and then both of you meet me up in those woods when you can."

He left her and went quickly back to the stern.

If the people behaved here as he had seen them behave at Gruz when the steamers came in, he knew he was going to have no difficulty. Already the stern was packed with eager excursionists.

The steamer bumped gently alongside, a rope was flung from the stern, another from the bow. The gang walk was run out, and the militia guard, who was standing in the quayside crowd, moved forward and took his place alongside the ship's steward who was taking the passengers' tickets as they left. But the process was slow and people were impatient.

From the well amidships, close to the gang plank, people began to step ashore. The youth party around Hudson began to chant a partisan song. The mandolin player stepped over the foot gap of water between ship and shore, and the whole party surged after him, shouting and calling to friends in the crowd.

In the confusion and laughing, shouting stir of bodies Hudson stepped ashore, too, and walked quietly across the dusty stretch of quayside with its spreading plugs of date palms.

He made leisurely to the right towards the far end of the wall and a stretch of sand where a few people were bathing. Above the beach the hill sloped up to the pine wood.

Half an hour later, lying just inside the wood, he heard the ship's hooter blow, and then he saw her pull away in a curve from the quay and move out towards the open water.

He lay back and lit one of the cigarettes from a packet which Franja had given him.

So far, he thought, everything had gone without a hitch. All they had to do now was to wait.

Zarko's men would be watching for him, but so far, he felt sure, they had lost him. If they had known about Metilini and Sandro, or followed Franja or Joseph, there would have been more than one guard on the quay below, and they would not have shrugged their shoulders with good-natured helplessness. The holiday mood would have been dampened at once and discipline maintained.

Sandro wouldn't be at Metilini until half-past eight or nine, just as it was dark. Twelve hours to go. And after that a night crossing to Italy.

It was midday before Yelitsa reached the apartment in the Ulica Jesac. As she went in she was met with the dry, unfriendly smell of a room which has been closed for several days. Dropping her bundle on the table, she crossed to open the window.

Tulio's geraniums were wilting for water. She went to the sink, filled a pitcher, and poured it over the plants.

She thought of Tulio. He was fond of flowers, and he would be good with children.

In the bedroom, taking off her scarf and the small jacket she wore over her dress, she stood before the octagonal mirror leaning out from the wall above the washstand. The dark eyes from her brown face watched herself curiously. She was strong and built to have children; it would be hard if now, when she wanted them, they did not come. She had guarded against it with Luca, been worried sometimes, and now she wondered if perhaps there was something about herself or Tulio which might prevent it.

She turned away and, putting on an overall, began to clean up the apartment.

Sandro and Tulio should be in sometime before midnight, and they would both be hungry. In her bundle were three small pieces of veal which she had stolen from the orphanage kitchen. She began to think of the meal she would prepare.

As she moved around, working, she was aware of the heavy midday silence everywhere. There was no sound of life from the Ulica.

Slowly the silence awoke an uneasiness in her. Ever since she had married this apartment had been her home. She knew it so well. But today the feeling was growing in her that she was a stranger here.

As she dusted, her eye was caught by the section of wall running from the dresser to the window. In a stepped pyramid, little photographs and devotional pictures ran up and down the wall. Yelitsa frowned and stepped forward. In the centre of the pyramid, against the green wallpaper, a small rectangle of faded paper showed up clearly.

When she had left the apartment, the photograph had been there, the family group which she knew Sandro cherished, of himself and his wife and the two boys.

She turned suddenly and went into Sandro's bedroom. It was a small, dark room, broken by the slope of the roof, and with an old army camp bed along one wall. She pulled the bed from the wall and knelt in the corner of the room to pull up a loose section of floorboard.

Underneath the board was a hole between the joists. It was here that Sandro kept his money, not dinars, but forty thousand lire. After the war there had been an order that all Italian currency must be changed—at an unfavourable rate—for dinars. Sandro had never changed his. The hole between the joists was empty. Unwilling to believe what she suspected, Yelitsa went back to her own bedroom. Most of Tulio's clothes had gone.

In the kitchen, feeling in the recess at the back of the stove, masked by a loose brick, she found, too, that his revolver and cartridges were not there. She stood up, her face dull, loose with anger and astonishment.

They'd gone. They weren't coming back.

She sat down at the table, unable to think beyond that point. Then slowly her thoughts began to shape themselves and she felt a calmness settle over her anger and fear, not swamping them, but holding them back for a time. Sandro and Tulio had left her. But there was more than that. They had left her in danger.

When they failed to return, the police would come to her. They would find out about the anonymous letter, they would want to know why she had not told more, why she had not denounced Sandro fully to them.

She had to protect herself. Sandro and Tulio wouldn't be missed until the next day. If she disappeared as well there was the chance that the police would assume she had gone with them.

But where could she go? She knew at once what she must do. Her family were from Budva, far down the coast

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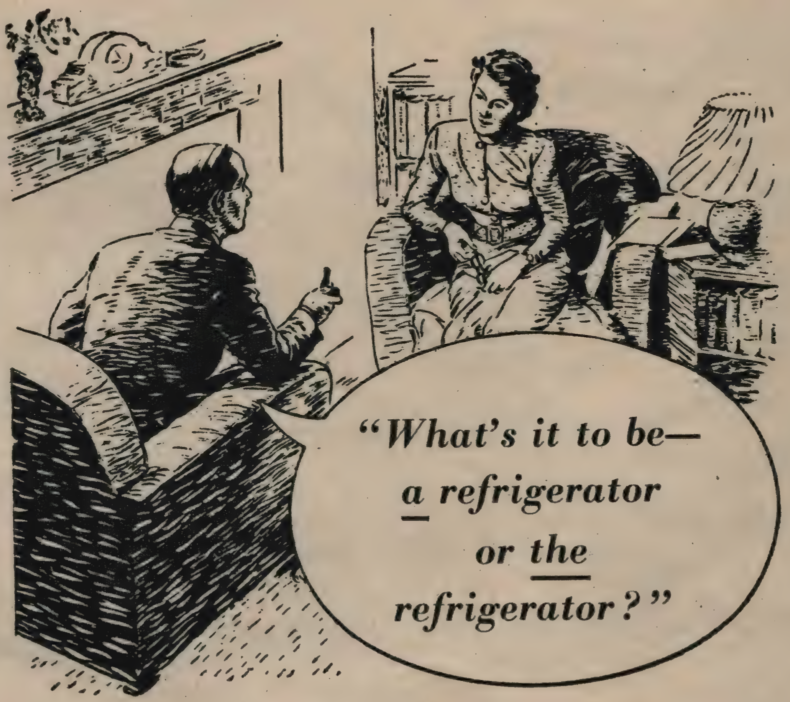

"What's it to be—
a refrigerator
or the
refrigerator?"

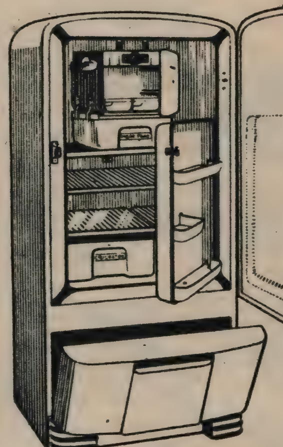
"Look at it this way," he said. "I *could* go out and get you one today. That is, if we simply *couldn't* wait and money were no object. But as you know . . . well, it seems silly to rush things . . . now."

When a husband starts like that, you know he's got something up his sleeve.

"I've found out three things," he went on. "Three interesting things. First—any modern refrigerator costs money, *but, size for size, Prestcold prices are the lowest.*

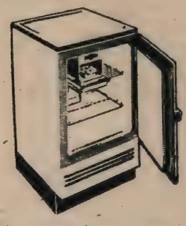
"Next—many refrigerators are perfectly good . . . *but on every practical point a Prestcold is better.* From the way it's built to the way it looks, for efficiency and roominess and really clever planning, it's plain to me a Prestcold is easily the finest refrigerator you can buy.

"And?—Oh yes—they're made by a first-class engineering firm. So . . . I put our name down. May have to wait, *but it's worth it.*"



Illustrated on the left is family model S.472, incorporating the 'Prestador' inner door for extra food storage. Price £64 plus £15. 19. 10 tax. Below right, table-top model S.311, price £45 plus £11. 3. 7 tax. Both made by the largest manufacturers of automatic refrigerators in Britain, both powered by the exclusive 'Presmetic' hermetically sealed unit.

*There is a
Prestcold Refrigerator
to suit every home,
every pocket*



In addition there is a comprehensive range of Prestcold equipment for commercial use—service cabinets, ice-cream conservators, frozen food cabinets, cold rooms, milk coolers, etc. For full details, contact any Prestcold Distributor or write direct.

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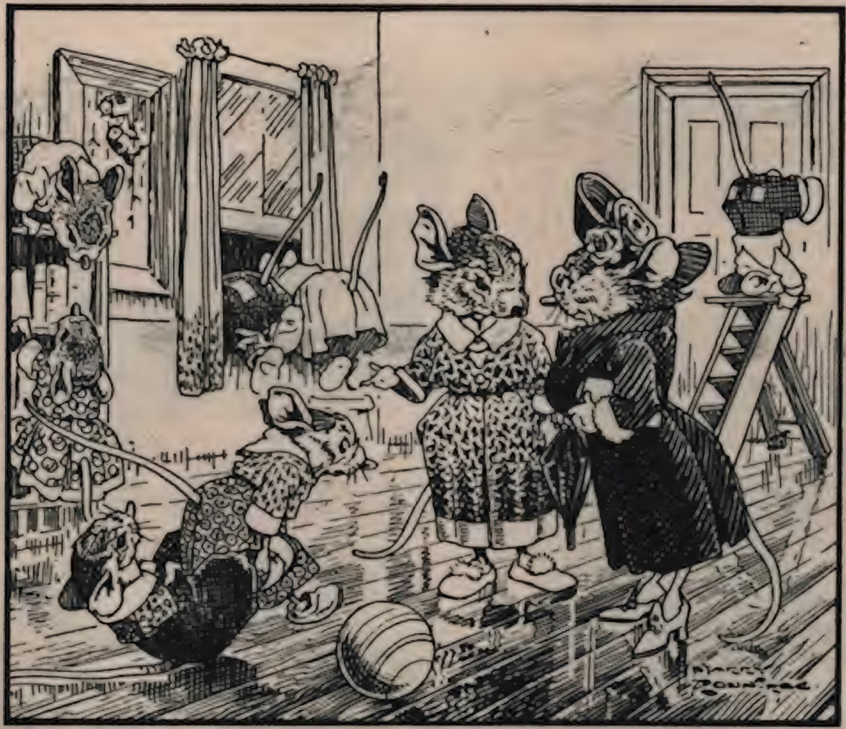

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A FOREST OF EYES

Continued from previous page

near the Albanian border. She had a brother and a sister, both married, in Albania, near Tirana.

She got the steamship guide from the dresser drawer. There was a boat at six that evening which would take her to Kotor. From there she could go on to Budva. Her relations would hide her if there was trouble, and later she could go across the border into Albania.

Knowing what she must do, her future planned, her confidence returned.

She got up and began to prepare herself a meal. Luca would never have deserted her, she thought, and she knew that she could not leave Dubrovnik without making a farewell visit to his grave.

She ate her meal, then washed up and tidied everything away, being careful to leave no sign that she had been there since the two men had gone.

In the town she bought a ticket for Kotor at the Putnik travel bureau and, stopping in the square for a moment, she picked from a flower stall a large bunch of marguerites for Luca's grave. Her boat did not go until six and she had plenty of time. She walked up the hill towards Gruz and the cemetery.

The flowers on Luca's grave were dead and brown. She cleared them away and placed her marguerites on the shelf. She crossed herself and stood for a moment, thinking of Luca. Pity for him, for herself, and a compassionate anger for the way life had treated them, brought tears into her eyes. She turned away, her lips thinned with her emotion, and began to walk down the gravelled sweep towards the gate.

The gate-keeper came out of the stone lodge at the gates and watched her. He was an old, bald-headed man in a green baize apron. He had a kindly, sleepy face, and as she came up to him he called to her gently: "Here a moment, child."

She stopped, turning towards him, and he came up to her. He put out his hand and held her wrist, and his grasp was suddenly strong.

Zarko's face was beaming, almost boyish in its expression of mischievous triumph. He leaned with both hands on the telephone receiver where it rested on the instrument, and his fingers played a quick tattoo on it.

Lepovitch watched him cautiously, knowing that momentarily he had no defence against him. Until this moment, things had been going badly. There had been no sign of Hudson, and they had learned an hour ago that Colonel Grol had cancelled his ticket for Makarska that evening.

"I'm going to handle her. I insist on it. You can go into the next room and listen." There was a new authority in Zarko's voice.

He went on, underlining his triumph. "I've never been happy about that anonymous note. Ever since I found that wreath on the grave I've had a feeling that one day whoever put it there would come back. Now we're going to have a talk to this girl, Yelitsa Venetti, who hated Raikes enough to betray him, and loved whoever lies in that grave enough to return and put flowers on it. I always said that it was here in Dubrovnik that we should find the answer."

When Lepovitch had gone, Zarko had Yelitsa brought in. He watched her as she sat in the big armchair, on the edge of the seat, her hands held together, her teeth biting gently at the inside of her lip.

Zarko was sorry for her. It was always unpleasant when one had to handle women. He leaned forward and spoke quietly, his voice friendly, seeking to give her the help which would draw from her what he wanted.

"Listen very carefully to me. I want you to help us, and if you show yourself willing I'll do all I can for you. I'm not making any promises, but I fancy you've always wanted to help us, even gone so far towards doing it. We won't forget that, and I give you my word that I'll make things as easy as I can for you. But"—the word rang between them with a menace that made Yelitsa start—"tell me one lie and I'll see that you never have the chance to tell another."

Not to his surprise, he heard a half-moan escape from her and saw the peasant gesture of despair as she raised a hand to her face. Drive her too hard, he thought, and she would break into a hysteria which would lose him time and maybe break his patience with its incoherence.

He went on quickly, paternally, rising and going round to her.

"We know you wrote an anonymous letter denouncing the Englishman, Raikes. We know your feelings for whoever lies in the grave at the cemetery. Now, tell me what else you know. About the other Englishman, Hudson, about whoever he is helping to escape and how it is to be carried out."

She began to talk, and he listened, moving quietly back to his desk, helping her with a question now and again. She kept her eyes from him, her voice unsteady, and Zarko knew that he was getting the truth.

By a quarter past six, Zarko and Lepovitch were sitting in a police launch, with the mainland dropping away behind them in the brown sirocco haze, heading for Metilini—a little less than a two-hour run before them.

Yelitsa—Zarko went over the facts and the arrangements he had made, as the warm sea air beat back into his face—had known only that Sandro and Tulio meant to escape on the Metilini run. She knew nothing of Hudson or of any man to escape from the hotel.

Grol, he knew now, was a red herring. But a check at the hotel had shown that the only man missing was Joseph, the waiter, who had taken his day off. And the girl, Franja, was missing, too.

From the Dubrovnik garrison he had got details of Sandro's run, and knew that by now Sandro would be on his way to Metilini. He was not scheduled to call there but he should clear the island by about half-past eight. Zarko had telephoned the police at Metilini, giving his instructions. Sandro's boat was to be watched down the coast and its progress reported to Metilini against Zarko's arrival. The police were to go over the holiday crowd looking for Hudson, Joseph and Franja. Full descriptions had been given them.

A watch was to be set up along the quayside and beaches and no one was to be allowed to use any of the boats. All sailing and rowing was to be curtailed.

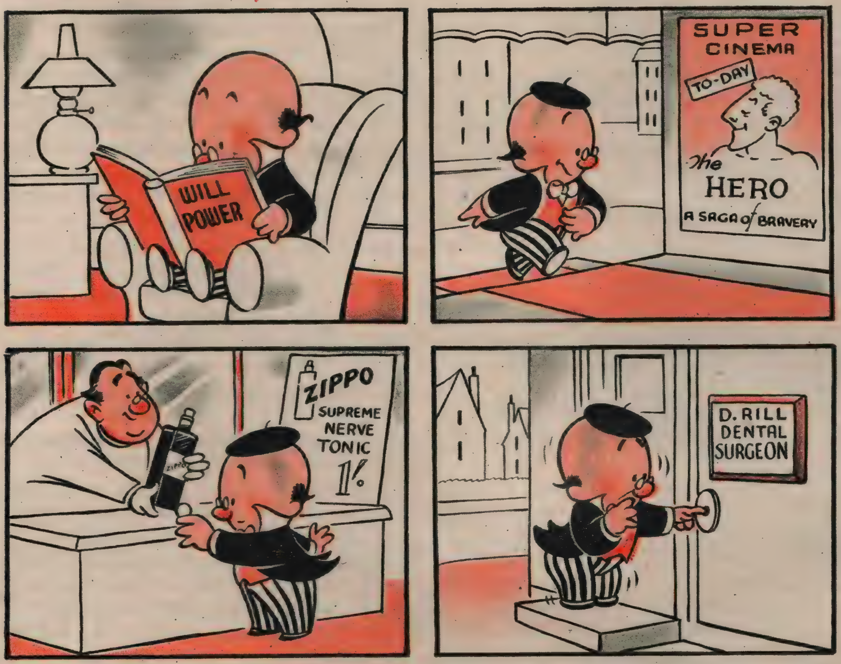
Zarko pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his face. The last half hour had been a busy one and he could feel the sweat against his body. He glanced across at Lepovitch. The man was sitting upright, stiff against the movement of the launch, his face set in hard lines.

No word passed between them. Lepovitch had been silent in the office while instructions and telephone calls had been made. He had walked up and down, biting gently at his nails.

Now they had two hours before them, sharing the raucous little world of the thrusting launch, each aware of the one's triumph, the other's bitter

MR. DIMPLE

by David Hand



pride. Lepovitch spoke suddenly. "That girl Yelitsa will do a life sentence. The bitch!"

"No. Five years, maybe. Less, if we both speak in her favour." Zarko emphasized the *both*. Then, after a pause, he went on: "After all, she's pulled us both out of a mess. You out of a bigger one than me. We should be grateful."

Lepovitch made no reply. He kept his eyes on the backs of the three militia men forward.

HUDSON had been right about Joseph. He had been angry and had not bothered to hide his feelings. Franja had sat silently at the foot of a pine while the two men talked.

"First I have to look after her, and then you come along and turn the whole thing into a boy scouts' party." As he spoke Joseph had taken off his norfolk jacket. "Here, you'd better wear this. If anything does go wrong they'll have your description sent out here."

Hudson took the jacket.

Joseph said: "I'm going to leave you. I'm going to the far side of the town. From the hill there I shall be able to see Sandro when he comes. I'll meet you outside the main gate of the town at eight. The light will be going then and we must look about for a boat to get out to Sandro. Keep out of the town until you have to go down."

He was gone, moving away through the pines.

Hudson sat down by Franja.

"He was very angry, wasn't he?" She looked down at him as he lay.

"Yes. But not with me so much. He was angry with himself and with the way he has to live. Do you think we shall get anything to eat or drink? It's going to be a long time."

"I can go down to the town later."

She looked at the sprawl of houses, the dusty arc of the quayside and the blue bowl of the bay.

Flags were flying from one or two buildings, and the quayside and square were full of the ant movement of the holiday crowd. From somewhere in the town came the faint sound of a brass band playing.

Metilini had been one of the first islands to be liberated from the Germans, and the anniversary came on the same day as an even older festival, some celebration which went back, perhaps, to the days when the growing year had moved man to a Corybantic invocation of fertility for himself and his fields and the flocks which spread thinly over the grey hills.

She said unexpectedly, surprising herself: "Why did you come back?"

Hudson did not reply at once. He rolled over and looked at her.

She looked very young and very cool, leaning back against the rough bark of the pine, a venetian red which, contrasting with the paleness of her hair and the quiet repose of her face, innocent, still-eyed, and the pale blue of the sky beyond, made him think of a Siennese painting of the quattrocento.

He answered evasively: "I don't know. I'm a methodical person, too logical and careful, perhaps. Something in me insisted that for once in my life I do something for which I could find no reason." He dropped back on the turf, stretching himself.

He had deliberately avoided her question, but he could not deceive himself. He was glad to be here with her. He felt now happy and contented. No matter what had gone before, or what might come, he had the impression that nothing could mar this brief period of waiting. The evening was far off, and for the moment they were both free to enjoy the long sunlit hours without care.

His mood was given back by Franja and they lay, laughing and talking, isolated on their hillside, Metilini and the coming night remote from them.

AT midday, Franja went down into the square and brought back a bottle of wine, some fruit and three eggs, which they sucked. And hanging from her wrist, Hudson saw, were two paper masks.

"What on earth are those for?"

Franja laughed. "Towards evening everyone wears them. It's part of the festival. I thought we might need them when we go down. They sell them in the square."

Hudson took the masks. They were badly shaped, of thin paper, but brightly coloured and with some faint trace of pagan inspiration in them still, as though behind the crude grimaces and bulbous noses, the wicked leer and wide-gashed mouths, there were still lingering elements of an ancient tradition.

After they had eaten, they moved along the edge of the wood, following the sun. The afternoon moved by and with its passing came the warm sirocco wind, and the sky through the pines took on the shabby tones of bad varnishing.

Both of them slept for a while, but the oppressive atmosphere made sleep restless for Hudson. He awoke to see Franja lying on her side sleeping peacefully. Behind her the dark colonnades

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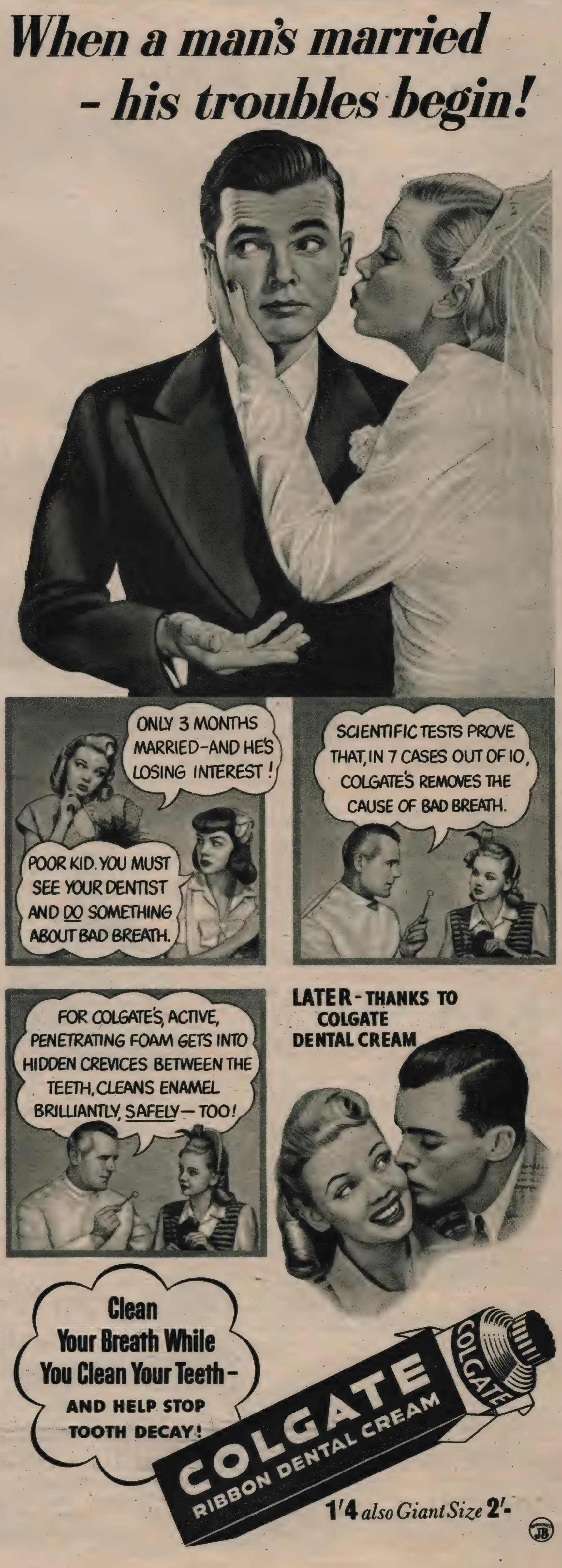
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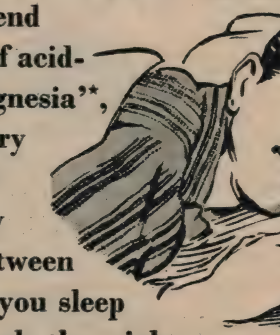

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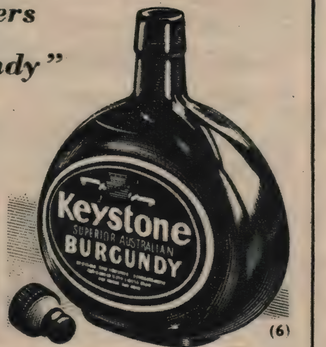

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HP
SAUCE
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

A FOREST OF EYES

Continued from previous page

of pine trunks were fading into the growing twilight.

He reached out and took her hand. For a moment she slept on. Then she woke and sat up, her eyelids heavy and lazy like a disturbed kitten's.

"It's a quarter to eight. We must go down."

Hudson helped her up. They began to move down the hillside. The square was a mesh of small, coloured lights now, and from the tower over the main gate a searchlight swept up and down the arc of the quay, flickering over the still waters of the bay, dragging its stiff length over the dusty waterfront, silvering for a moment the figures of the people by the water's edge.

As they reached the first of the houses they put on their masks and entered the odorous darkness of a small alleyway at the far end of which part of the square could be seen, as noisy and bright as a fair booth.

Coming on to the square they both stopped, held by the unexpectedness of the sight before them. Over by the main gate, an orchestra on a raised platform was playing, the music amplified around the square by loudspeakers. Lights were strung across the fronts of the houses and shops and from a lamp standard on a small island in the centre of the square flared four paraffin torches, great leaping tongues of yellow flame, wreathed with a thick, acrid smoke that in the sluggish air dipped and curled downwards.

Crowded dancers weaved through the thin smoke haze like figures from some phantasmagoria: young men and women in their old partisan uniforms, with bare brown arms and necks, red scarves and the silver flash of Tito's star on breast and bosom.

Streamers of paper whipped through the air in brilliant parabolas. Above the music, the feet on the cobbles beat out a tempestuous tattoo. Girls in peasant dress swung by, old men, old women, shirts flapping, suits tightly buttoned, jackets swinging free, patched trousers, long skirts, short skirts, bare feet, high-heeled shoes, a medley of bodies and clothing, laughter and blaring music. The square was peopled with demons and witches, satyrs and fauns—jovial eyebrows, bulging red cheeks, gaping painted mouths and wine-dark noses, a bacchanal swirl of faces that swam up from the light of the torches, a whirlpool of bodies that touched, broke apart, flung out groping hands and dropped away into the shadows.

And everywhere there was a wild, unrestrained feeling of happiness, as though the spirit celebrated here had nothing to do with any military liberation but went back to a greater liberation, the ancient freedom of the body from the rigours of a past winter, the spring-fed freedom of the mind from worry and care before the ripe promise of the growing crops and fecund herds.

Hudson turned to Franja, disturbed by the riot of movement and sound and touched by the pagan abandon which reached eagerly for him. For a moment he wanted to reassure himself that there were human faces still, the soft, unmoved faces of men and women. He found himself facing a young body, the bold sweep of breasts and the flexed forward thrust of a young thigh and torso, and above this the face of a wild-laughing woman, nostrils flaring, the lips a great wound across the white cheeks, the eyes strange under the upsweep of broad black brows.

He laughed then, already caught by the pulse and throb of the spirit alive in the square, and catching her arm he drew her into the dancers.

She went with him, eager, held close to him, swinging and turning with him, and the dance swallowed them up, took them to itself, gave them its wildness and flung them through the dark lanes of laughter and bodies. He felt his hands on her warm body, heard her shout something to him and called back, and then, uncaring of words, whirled on, laughing, knowing only that while they moved out here, there was nothing which could touch them, nothing that had claim on them except the sudden wild happiness and joy which flowed in and around them, pulsing, beating like the surge of a great heart which gave them life, and an exultation which carried forgetfulness of all fear.

The band stopped playing and they dropped away, breathless, into chairs by a small table outside a café.

They sat there, shaking still with silent laughter, and he put out his hand, holding hers still, anxious to keep her close to him. A waiter pirouetted up to them and put two bottles of beer, unbidden, on the table.

"You must drink from the bottle. No more glasses left." Then he was gone, sliding and cavorting back through the tables, disappearing under the floral decorated portrait of Tito over the café door.

The sight of the portrait suddenly sobered Hudson. He watched Franja drink and then he said: "I wish there was nothing more for us to do except stay here and dance."

"So do I." Her words were breathless, eager—a girl jealous of a rich pleasure.

He laughed. "We've got other things to do. Some other time we can dance. I must go and see Joseph. You stay here."

"Don't be long . . . please."

Hudson pressed her hand for a moment and then rose. He walked slowly through the pavement crowd, working round towards the main gate, and as he went he saw an unmasked face, a face that was alive, puzzled and vaguely solemn.

A young militia guard, rifle slung over his shoulder, was threading his way through the dancers, and as he went he peered, frowning, at the moving couples. And then Hudson saw two more guards moving through the crowd with a slow, helpless good humour. And by the main gate another guard leaned back against the warm stones and watched the thin straggle of people coming in through the gate to join the dance.

HUDSON went, unhurried, around the square and through the archway. The eyes of the guard followed him for a moment, lost interest and turned away.

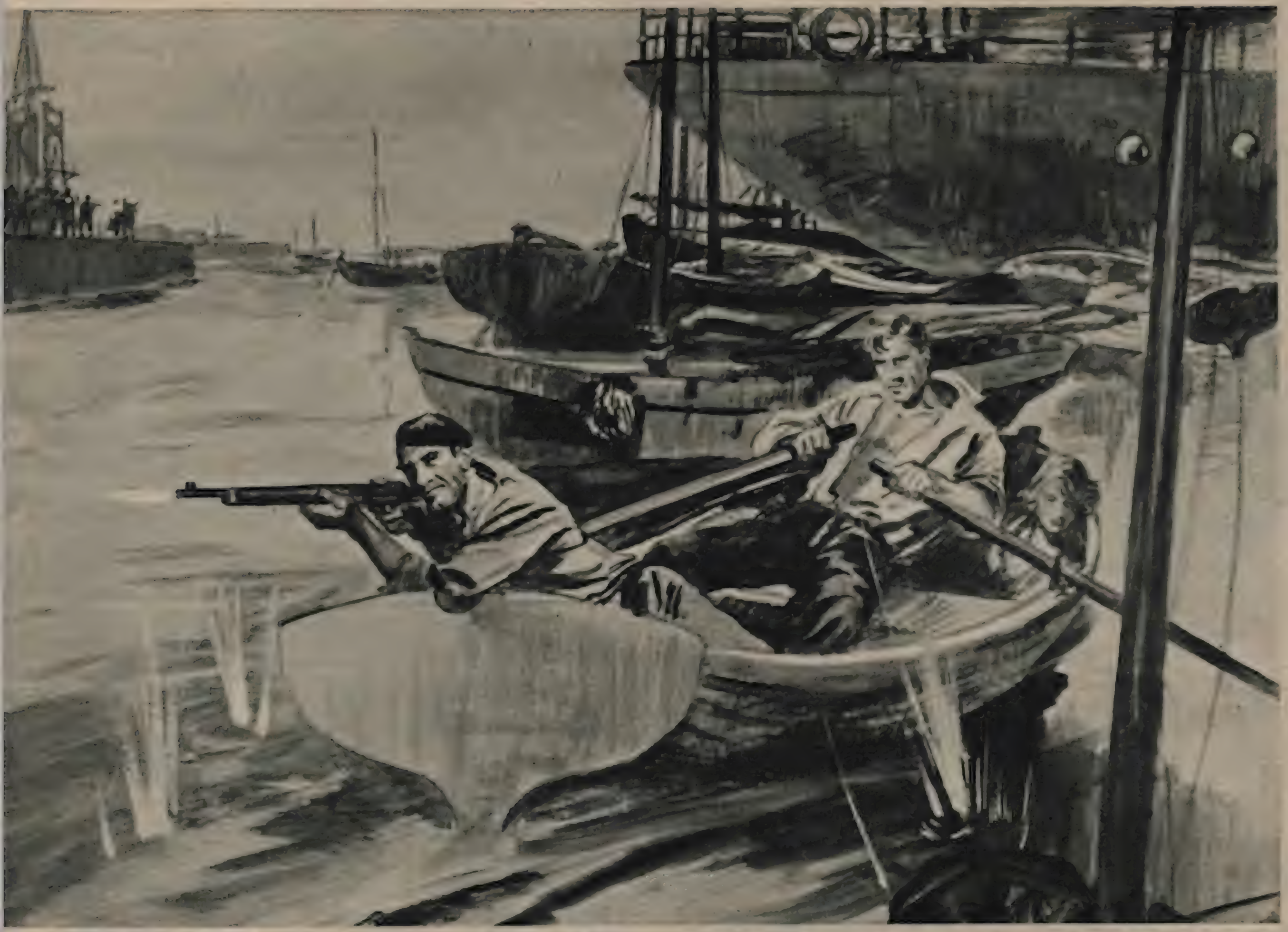
Hudson slipped into the shadow of the great wall and moved down towards the first of the date palm clusters. Beyond him, the searchlight drew a bone-white finger across the water, and, as it passed, Hudson saw that along the curved stretch of the waterfront three guards had been stationed about fifty yards apart, and that the few people still on the dusty quay were now making their way towards the gateway to the town.

Joseph was waiting for him in the shadow of a palm, and he knew at once that something had happened. The man's face was dark with angry shadows.

"I thought you were never coming." The words were sharp, striking at Hudson.

"It's barely eight. Have you seen Sandro's boat?"

"Yes. There's something coming



Hudson pulled desperately for cover between the moored yachts. From the stern, Joseph kept up a sharp fire

down the coast now with riding lights showing. It should be him. In another half hour he'll be in. But it isn't that. Something's happening in this town. That searchlight up there isn't part of the celebrations. And neither are those guards by the water. For the last two hours they've allowed no rowing boats to go out. Something's gone wrong and it's probably something to do with you. You should never have come!"

Joseph made an angry, impatient movement, and as he did so, above the distant sound of the band and the singing dancers, a new sound crepitated against the black and silver echelons of light and darkness over the water. They turned and saw a small bow light probe through the night.

Into the bay came a long, powerful launch. It swept across the water and turned into the far end of the quay, drawing alongside the broad steps which led down to the water. Five shadows jumped from it.

They heard the hard echo of a command and four of the shadows moved swiftly across the dusty stretch of ground towards the main gate. The fifth stayed at the launch.

"Trouble." Joseph edged into the shelter of the palm, and Hudson went with him. The finger of searchlight played down to the limit of its depression and the four figures were suddenly vivid against an immense backcloth of night. Both men saw them clearly: Zarko, Lepovitch and two militia guards. They went past, walking quickly, and disappeared under the archway.

Hudson looked across at Joseph. The man's face was set stiffly. It was the fear of such a moment as this which had brought Hudson back.

"What do we do now?" Hudson spoke gently.

Joseph's voice was low and harsh. "Sandro will be here shortly. That launch is the only thing in the bay which can catch him. It's got to be put out of action. You go back and get Franja. We've either got to swim or steal a boat. I'm going to look after the launch and the guard.

"Can you do it by yourself?"

Joseph gave a dry laugh. The anger between them was dying. "One's enough. The guard may have to be killed. It is better that I should do that. It's part of my profession. For you, it would be killing a man. For me, it is just another thing in my way."

He was gone, moving along the thick wall shadow. Hudson turned and went quickly back to the main gate. High above the arch a great red-and white banner proclaimed: *Zivio drug Tito*.

The Metilini chief of police had had just enough to drink to make him a little less awed of Zarko and Lepovitch than he normally would have been. His office was over the main gateway, three small windows giving a view of the crowded square.

Stolid, red-faced, his deliberate speech and movement irritated both Zarko and Lepovitch. Lepovitch stood at one of the windows watching the crowd. Zarko lay back in a chair. Both men were hot, sweating with nervous impatience.

"As soon as I got your message I put the guards out. They've been checking identity cards and watching ever since. But you can see what it's like out there . . ." he waved a hand towards the window. "Like looking for a——"

"Yes, yes, come on, man." Lepovitch swung round. He wanted to punch the man into quicker speech. "We haven't found them. Venetti's boat had left the garrison, but we've had it watched. The last report from the coast road says it's coming round the headland now. Its lights are on. If it's coming here it should be in the bay in another half-hour. I've done all I could, short of stopping the whole festival. This is a great day for Metilini. People aren't in the mood——"

"To hell with their mood! This is more important than any festival." Zarko swung himself upright. He went over to the window and looked out. The band was playing a waltz now and there was a gentler movement in the square. He felt Lepovitch's arm brush him as the man turned impatiently back to the room.

"They're here, on this island. There's no doubt of that. There's only one thing to do." Lepovitch's voice was fierce, staccato, against the slow drift of waltz music.

"What?" Zarko turned.

Lepovitch faced him, taut, authority bracing him, his glasses glinting, a long hand scratching at the side of his lean face.

"We've got half an hour. We must go down there. Stop the music. Make an announcement and have every person take off his mask. If they're in the square we shall find them in ten minutes. A man with a cut on his face can't hide it."

"But that's nonsense!" Zarko protested angrily. "They may already be on Venetti's boat. They may not be in the square. It's wasting time. We must go back to the launch and go out to the boat."

"Nonsense?" Lepovitch's eyes narrowed. "It's you who talk nonsense. Can't you see it's the only thing to do. Even if they're on the boat already we can catch them up in the launch at any time within the next hour. But they're not on the boat, otherwise it wouldn't be coming along on its normal course with all lights on."

"I say we should go out to the boat now. Once we've got that, then there's no escape for them wherever they are."

"No?" They were angry, pugnacious now, their frayed nerves strained by the events of the day and the racking atmosphere of the sirocco. Lepovitch showed his teeth in a vicious grimace of impatience. "How do you know they haven't seen us come here? If they see us go out to the boat they'll know they must find some other escape. This island's twenty miles long. There are other boats and other islands. Let them get away now and we may never get them."

"We shall get them! But let's get the boat first."

Lepovitch came up to Zarko, tall, threatening, stirred to a point of violence by the opposition. "Why do you argue with me? Why do you always want to prove I'm wrong? I believe that you want them to escape. You're a traitor yourself. You're full of sympathy for these neo-fascist swine. Don't think I haven't noticed it! Don't think that isn't why I deliberately asked for full authority to be given to me. Now I'm going to use that authority!"

His voice was almost screaming with anger, the relief from days of tension and dislike for this plump, stupid policeman.

Zarko wanted to hit him. He would have given much to have smacked hard at that thin, anger-torn face, to have cut brutally across the growing hysteria. He faced him for a moment, the sweat running down his large face, then with a weary movement of his shoulders he dropped back a step. What was the good? Every moment was wasting time.

"Go ahead, then," he said quietly. It's your responsibility, and I won't question it any further. But don't forget—I wanted to go out to the boat first." He looked across at the Metilini man and surprised him with an owlish look of pleasure on his face.

Lepovitch ignored them and moved towards the door. The two followed him.

Joseph was swimming. He had gone beyond the bay to the small bathing strand, and there he had slipped into the water. Now he was moving quietly through the still shapes of the moored rowing boats and yachts which masked the quayside steps from time to time.

He could see the militia guard with his slung rifle standing above the launch. To the side of the steps a small rowing boat swayed at the end of a painter tied to a ring in the wall. He swam in slowly, almost reluctantly, knowing what he must do and finding the thought of it a tiredness in his mind, like a dull pain.

Hudson disliked and distrusted him. The girl made him angry with her innocent face and anxious eyes. But dislike and distrust, innocence and anxiety were worn and shabby with him. There was no feeling in him except the dark drive to go forward because he must.

He would make the small sound which would bring the guard to the top of the steps, repeat it and see the man come cautiously, suspiciously, down a couple of steps, rifle ready, eyes seeking to fathom darkness—and only darkness waiting for him, a darkness to be shot with the blood-streaks of pain when hands went up and caught his neck. The stupid, clumsy body would come twisting and beating down to the water.

All this, unless something went wrong, as one day it must, for darkness never fought entirely on one side.

In the square, Hudson decided to give Joseph twenty minutes. He sat down beside Franja and quietly told her what had happened. She said nothing. But across the table her hand moved and he took it, pressing the soft palm reassuringly.

They sat with the untouched beer bottles between them, watching the slow movement of the waltz. And

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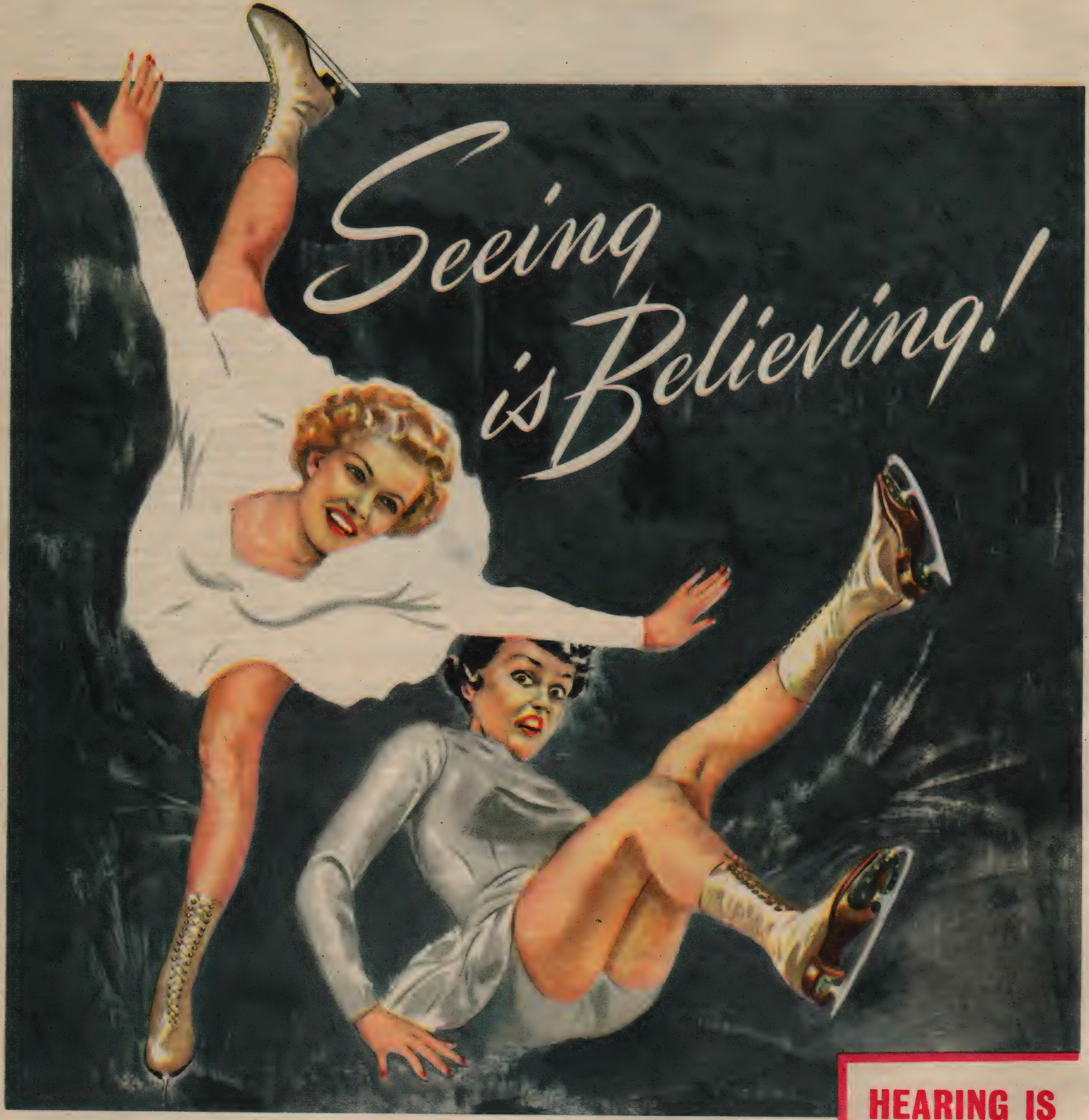
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Already, more than half the housewives in the country know

PERSIL WASHES WHITER!

PKR 1188-1284

A FOREST OF EYES

Continued from page 33

now, under the smoky light, beneath the coloured streamers with their party slogans, even the chatter of dancers and drinkers seemed muted, touched with a passing sadness.

"When the next dance begins, we'll get up and dance across the square to the gate. Then we'll slip out." He looked at his watch and saw the long second hand tick round.

The band began to play a quick march, stamping, beating away the lethargy and sadness, and the square was a maelstrom of movement. The painted faces streamed by and the eyes through the masks glittered like jewels.

Hudson took Franja by the arm and they joined the dancers.

He watched the guards as he moved, turning and swinging, and the great dark spread of the gate's mouth drew closer. They were a yard from it, hemmed in by a knot of dancers, when the music stopped suddenly. For a moment the sound of voices and laughter carried on.

Then silence collapsed through the hot air of the sirocco and lay across the coloured quadrangle and people turned, slow, curious movements, like the stir of a young plantation in a sudden breeze, facing towards the band. Arms dropped, couples moved a little apart, and a voice, gigantic through the amplifiers, reached rasping across the square.

"Comrades, the People's Republic is always in danger. In this square now are three traitors. They are working to destroy all which we have fought to create. They must not succeed. When I finish speaking, you must all take off your masks. Let each man look at his neighbour, let each woman search out the face of the man she stands by. The chief man we want is tall, wears a blue shirt, grey trousers, and down his right cheek is a long, fresh cut. He is an Englishman, an agent of the capitalist warmongers who hate all true democracy. Find him and you will find with him the other two, another man and a young woman, fair-haired, slim. People of Metilini, comrades, we ask your help. Each one of you will now take off your mask. Let no one hesitate, for hesitation can only be a sign of guilt."

There was silence. Gone was the happiness now; gone the wild, pagan abandon.

For a moment there was no movement in the square, as though each soul feared that in the act of unmasking, the stigmata of treason might have marked the hot, sweat-runnelled cheek, the soft, down-touched curve. Then movement and sound broke across the crowded forms.

Arms lifted like the pale sway of moonlit branches, heads swung, and fingers sought the corded fillets which held the masks, and the stir of the crowd was like the stir of a wind-swayed forest, a forest studded with eyes; eager to seek out the guilty, eager to flame with anger against the helpless ones who had been caught in the dark aisles.

Hudson reached up for his mask and began to feel for the cord, and as he did so he said quietly to Franja: "We're going to run for it. The moment I move follow me." Through his mask he saw her reaching for her own. He turned, slipping the cord over his head, and he measured the distance to the guard in the arched gateway. The man was watching the crowd.

The masks came off and faces turned.

Hudson drew off his mask and found Franja's face, still, anxious, fear large in her eyes. A man close to him moved. Hudson saw an upflung arm point at him, and the man's mouth gaped, ugly with eagerness, as he shouted.

Hudson took Franja's arm and jumped forward. The guard saw him coming and his hand went to his rifle. Hudson hit him and he went down, the loose weapon clattering on the stones.

He ran, pulling Franja, and behind them a great shout swamped the square.

Under the arch their own footsteps rang sharply, echoing in the high vault of darkness above them. The great sweep of dusty quayside was bare before them as the searchlight splayed downwards, thinning the wall shadow to a narrow strip.

Behind them, the crowd surged into the archway. A rifle shot sounded above the wolfish babel. The bullet kicked into the ground at Hudson's side and the flung dirt stung his cheek waspishly. He raced on, not sparing his speed, half-pulling Franja after him as she draw on all the strength of her fear to keep up.

Away to his right, far up the quay, he saw one of the guards drop to his knees and in the steady searchlight beam he saw the upflung rifle, the stilled poise as the man aimed. He waited for the shot. Over his shoulder he saw that the crowd had fanned out behind, streaming after them like a rabble of phantoms.

If the guard missed them, his bullet would rip into the crowd behind. Then the shot came. Away to the left came a high, glutinous sob that dropped suddenly into a long scream.

Two other guards came racing across the quay at an angle, to head them off. A glance at the direction of the launch showed him that they could make it with about twenty yards to spare. The searchlight jerked up, giving them a fresh arc of naked light to run in, and at the fringe of its beam he saw a black figure standing above the launch.

He prayed, then, letting panic force his words. Oh, God—let it be Joseph and not the guard. The man dropped to his knees, the rifle swung up.

Then, after an age which was compounded of the awful silence ahead, the mad drumming of his heart and the beat of his feet, tumultuous and rhythmic against the lighter thud of Franja's sandals beside him, and the animal rumble of sound behind, Hudson saw the stab of flame from the rifle muzzle. There was the crash of glass and the searchlight went out. Before him, blessed, and adding strength to them both, he heard Joseph call his name.

They ran and now, from before them, Joseph's rifle spoke again, short, angry words, flung into the face of the pursuing crowd who halted for a moment, spreading out, an amorphous blur in front of the bright mouth of the gateway. Then other rifles answered back.

Their feet struck the hard cobbles of the quayside.

Then Hudson heard the sound of a bullet hit flesh. He felt the shock travel from Franja through her fingers and up his arm and she fell.

He heard himself call her name with a desperate urgency as he dropped beside her, slipping his arm round her shoulders.

"Franja!"

She moved, trying to rise, and behind them he saw the dark crowd spreading towards them, the air full of the menace of cries. He picked her up, saw the long blood score against the side of her face where she had fallen, and as he began to run he worried for a second about the sandal which fell and was left behind. He raced on, holding her, crouching low as bullets hit the cobbles and ricocheted into the night-bound sea.

There was then no more thought in him. Events ceased to have orderly succession. He flung Franja into the small boat brutally, her head striking the wet thwart. Joseph held to the steps, firing, and then pushed off. He knew that he made a wild grab for the oars, and was pulling, pulling, his breath sobbing and his eyes on the still figure of Franja. Behind him in the darkness the lights of an approaching schooner shone red and green.

He pulled out, Joseph lying in the stern and firing at the land, keeping the crowd and the guards back. He rowed, sliding for cover between the moored yachts and Joseph shouted wildly, encouraging and exhilarated. "The launch will be out of action for hours. We can do it. Sandro's just coming in."

He turned and saw the pale bulk of the circling schooner, its motor *put-putting* gently, and he shouted:

"Sandro! It's Hudson!"

An hour later they were in a thick, driving pall of low cloud and mist, warm and heavy, gull of moisture that beaded the deck and left long smears across the rail where the hand touched it or a rope chafed. They had eight hours of darkness before them and every moment brought Italy nearer.

Hudson looked back towards the little wheelhouse. The three of them, Sandro, Tulio and Joseph, were grouped there, close together, talking quietly, a mutter of sound hardly audible above the steady drive of the marine engine. They seemed far away, already like strangers, figures which had peopled a dream and now persisted for a while in the memory.

He felt Franja stir on the pile of canvas, where she lay crotched in the bend of his arm. He looked down and found her eyes open.

The sleeve of her dress was torn where his impatient fingers had ripped the stuff to get at her wound. About the top of her arm a length of rag was bound tightly, discoloured against the pale flesh.

The wind took the loose edge of her torn sleeve. He smiled, bending and pulling closer about her the blanket which Sandro had given her. She said nothing.

There was between them an expanding understanding which, while this night lasted, would have no need of words. He leaned over again and kissed her. Her free arm moved around his neck, and the fingers, dirty and dust-stained, the nails broken from her fall, slid into his hair, holding him, hurting him with the fierceness of their grip.

In Metilini the crowd were dancing again. The paraffin lights flared, the long slogans drooped in the lax wind, and Zarko, watching the dancers, noticed that many of the paper masks were now split and broken, limp and stained with perspiration. Here and there couples had thrown them aside.

He wondered what would happen now. Tomorrow Belgrade would know, and after that?

For the moment he found it hard to attach any importance to his anxiety. He might survive, probably would, since if they had done as he wanted there would have been no escapes, and the responsibility for the failure was not directly his. But one never knew. He might lose his job. But he could always be a wheelwright, always find something for his hands. He was sorry for Lepovitch.

The man was sitting at the table behind him, shoulders drawn down, no longer arrogant with the tigerish confidence of the young man from Belgrade. It would be hard for him. He went over and put his hand on Lepovitch's shoulder and the gesture was friendly, sympathetic.

At the touch, Lepovitch stood up, taking into his hand the loose sheet of paper before him. He walked away, folding the paper neatly.

The words on it, the draft of a telegram he meant to send, were held clearly in his mind. *Returning Belgrade tomorrow. Mission here a failure.* He could lie, pervert many facts, but could he build up a case against Zarko which would give Belgrade a victim and excuse his own failure? At least, he had to try.

"Come down to the square and have a beer," Zarko said kindly. "We both need it."

He went towards the door, opening it, waiting for Lepovitch. The man shook his head.

"No. I've a telegram I must send."

Zarko shrugged his shoulders and went out. Lepovitch hesitated for a few moments then picked up the telephone.

THE END

"A Forest of Eyes," by Victor Canning, will be published in book form by Hodder and Stoughton in May, price 8s. 6d.

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THE CAT HAD ONE MASTER

Continued from page 22

the hotel lounge when Helen told me about the letters and what her husband had done. I left her, went up the river bank to cool off."

"What time was this?"

"About four. Perhaps earlier."

Chafik recalled that Helen did not visit his office until nearly five o'clock. He asked: "When did you return?"

Ashford considered. "I wasn't away long. Perhaps twenty minutes. But Helen was gone. There was a message from Atesian, he wanted to see me urgently."

"You came here at once on receipt of the message?"

"I took a cab. You can check. I rang the bell, but nobody answered. Then I saw the door was open." He frowned, and fear and bewilderment were in his eyes, and his mouth trembled. Enforcing discipline, he went on, "I stood in the hallway and called Atesian, but there was no answer. So I began to look in the rooms. I went to that one."

He pointed to the door of the library.

Chafik asked, "You entered?"

"I think so. I remember rows of books, but then. . . ." Ashford waved a hand in front of his eyes. "Blackout. That's the way it's been hitting me. When I came out of it I was down at the Alwiyah Club. It's a good story if you want to believe it," he added grimly, helplessly.

Inspector Chafik's mouth pulled down at the corners. He said: "Search your mind, Mr. Ashford. Try to remember what you saw in that room. The smallest detail may help."

"I saw nothing!" Ashford held his head. "Don't talk like a damn' psychiatrist. I've had enough of them," he shouted. "I tell you I don't know what I saw; I don't know what happened. Maybe he had a gun. Maybe I took it from him. Maybe I shot him. I don't know!"

He stared round wildly, struggling for breath. The inspector heard Helen Atesian's faint, quickly suppressed sob as she left her chair to go to the tormented young man. Her woman's arms went around him and she took his head on her breast. "Peter," she said in a low and vibrant voice. "Peter. . . ." She said his name again and again, and the single repeated word said all the unsaid things to comfort him and make him quiet.

Chafik stood watching, deeply moved, bitterly helpless. Then he turned away sharply.

HE was grateful for the garden's evening breeze which came cool from the Tigris, sweetened by the perfume of citrus groves. Several of his men stood under one of the shade trees, looking at something. Presently Sergeant Abdullah emerged from the huddle of uniforms.

Abdullah saluted and said, "Sir, we have found the cat. "It was shot. I venture to suggest the bullet came from the weapon also fatal to Mr. Atesian. The calibre compares."

Like its master, the cat had been shot at close range; there were indications of its being killed at the scene of burial. An attempt had been made to conceal the small grave by replanting flowers, but the plants had wilted.

Abdullah said, "The killing of the creature was senseless. A senseless act shows an unbalanced mind."

"Your reasoning begins with a false premise, Abdullah, and therefore the conclusion in invalid. The killing of the cat was not senseless." Chafik spoke with quiet satisfaction. "Let Joseph identify the animal."

The sergeant brought the old man. Joseph's active tongue became still as he stood looking at the shattered corpse of his master's pet. He touched it with his foot, bent to examine it, an expression of bewilderment made his hard face mobile, but there was no pity in it.

Chafik said, "Who did this, Joseph?"

The servant shook his head. "It is of no importance now. Only my master loved Shah."

"Then who killed Shah, Joseph?"

This time Chafik's question touched a spring and the old man's hands flew to cover his face, but not in time to hide his horror. The sleeve of his gown slipped to show the marks of the cat's spiteful claws on his wrist; the bowed shoulders shook and tears were released, the grief-fattened helpless tears of the aged, too long dammed.

"Who killed it?"

Joseph dropped his hand. "Shah is dead because of the foreigner," he said, and added hastily, "The woman hated the cat, so her lover destroyed it."

Chafik said softly, "How you hate them both!"

"This was a peaceful house until my master took the woman. The master never quarrelled with his sister in the old days——"

"So brother and sister quarrelled when the new mistress came?" Chafik asked insinuatingly. "Often? Violently?"

"Madame Chauvian only wished to warn my master. She begged him not to bring the woman here. And afterwards, she warned him not to trust this woman, to watch her every movement. And she was right," Joseph said vindictively.

"So madame told her brother. And it caused a quarrel?"

"How could it not? My master said he would let the woman go to the foreigner. What shame! What shame that all should know about the child. . . ." Joseph stopped, clutched the inspector's arm, and went on in a wheedling voice, "Let the man die as my master died. And the woman. Let there be justice."

Chafik gently freed himself. "There shall be God's justice," he promised, and re-entered the house.

THE time was early evening. Faintly, from the many mosques of Baghdad, came the high chant of the criers summoning the faithful to sunset prayers. Within the house, shaded lights were turned on and Helen Atesian and Peter Ashford sat talking quietly.

The Englishman stood up, looking embarrassed, and said to the inspector, "I'm sorry. I flew off the handle."

Chafik smiled. "You were distraught. That is a common condition. I have just found a dead cat, Shah, and the person who killed it was also distraught."

Helen Atesian had risen and was looking at him with horror. "But that is unreasonable. . . ."

"I would have considered it unreasonable if the cat had been found alive. I could not have worked a live cat into the pattern of this case." The little man added softly, "I have finished my weaving now. . . ."

Madame Chauvian was recalled to the hall. The tall, angular figure was motionless now; grief was frozen, even the clasped hands were still. Joseph stood at a respectable distance, watching the group.

Chafik stood thinking quietly. Then, abruptly, he turned to Peter Ashford. "There is no case against you. You are free to leave Baghdad."

The fabric of his flat voice was

Continued on page 38

NOW YOU KNOW

WALLOWING in a steaming hot bath is one of life's luxuries. It can also kill you.

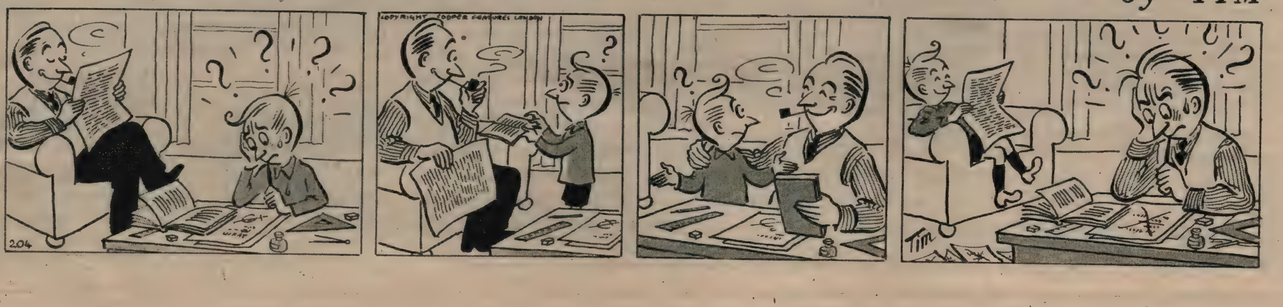
Taking too long over a hot bath can easily bring on a heart attack. It happened recently to a man who used to lie for more than two hours in his bath. When it became cold he would run in more hot water. More than fifty people die that way every year.

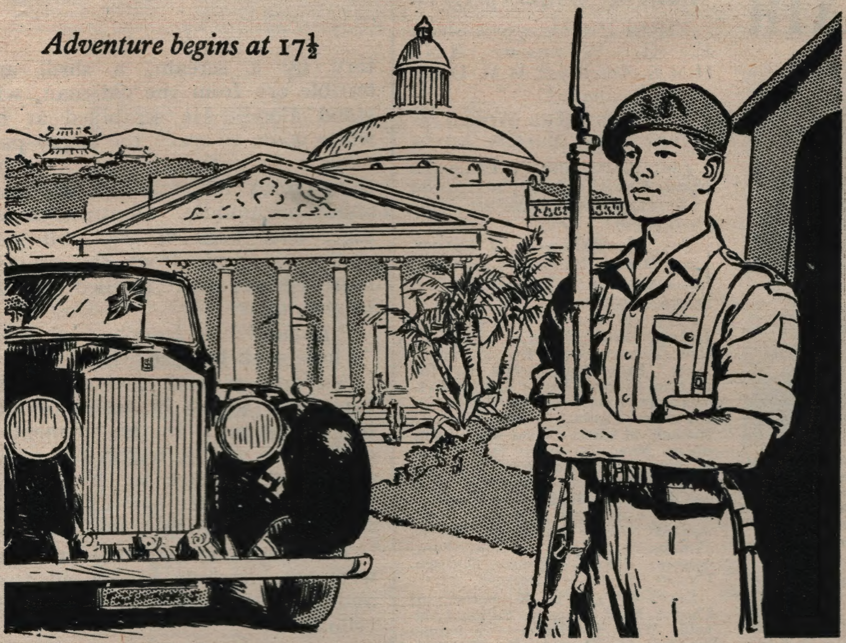
When you take a bath don't stay in it much more than ten minutes and make sure there's ventilation for the steam to escape. A hot and steamy atmosphere is particularly dangerous to middle-aged people suffering from stomach trouble.

And, of course, beware of chills. Don't go into a cold room or for a walk immediately after you've had a bath.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM





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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated April 8 and in JOHN BULL dated April 15, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

"Bullets" SWISS HOLIDAYS coming!

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

The National Cake
Ever Since The War
Partner Sam
Brains And Brawn
A Good Time
Halfway There
The Door's Open, So
Solemn Warning
Turned Upside Down
I Wouldn't Worry If
Honeyed Words
Wait For It And
Our Baby
Taken For A Ride
His Ancestors
Too Much
Over The Precipice
Needs Spring-cleaning
Harmless Enough
Not On The Bill

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

To Save A........................
Wrecked Dad's........................
Grabbed The........................
How The Official........................
Regardless Of........................
What..................Enjoys Most

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

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Continued in previous column

Continued from next column

WHEN? D. Maddrell, 42 Hallwood Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester: WHEN SHE DRIVES—HE CARESSES HER *Hand-brake*! A. G. Shadbolt, 8 Barforth Road, Peckham Rye, S.E.15: UNTOLD MILLIONS — IN "BONDS," COMMUNISM'S "POVERTY."

For ten winners of £2 10s. see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin* dated March 4.

25 Prizes of £1, 100 of 10s., and 2,000 of 2s. 6d. have also been posted.

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FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 675**

1. Self-reliant, modern business girl isn't easy to
4. Reviewer snowed under with books may do this
6. Queer fish are found in some strange these
8. There's nothing fine in being persuaded by this of money to do a good deed
12. A man is likely to attract attention who walks with
13. Sometimes dresses magnificently
14. The melting of ice and snow sometimes produces a dangerous one in many districts

Down Clues

1. Clever palmist may well read yours pretty accurately
2. This can be very deceiving
3. Despite their value, we should not allow them to ruin the scenery
5. Colour sometimes leads one to suspect
7. Bass is often very effectively used in
9. You get them in stables
10. This should not be considered in ring
11. Even when forward line is ably and persistently this, goals are often scarce

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11	■	■	■	12 A	I		■	M	S
E	M	■	I	L	L	■	P	I	T
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CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

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Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

THE CAT HAD ONE MASTER

Continued from page 36

torn by a scream, a shrill and terrible cry from the old man, who stood alone. He scrabbled at his white gown to reach the baggy pantaloons beneath, to snatch something from the folds of the sash about his middle. Disappointment, rage, hate born of grief, all were ready to speak from the stubby-barrelled revolver levelled at the Englishman.

"Justice!" Joseph shouted. "There shall be justice!"

Ashford pushed Helen Atesian back and stood in front of her, facing the gun. In this moment of crisis there was no terror, but rather a concrete menace for his courage to cope with. He saw Chafik moving swiftly through the shadows.

The inspector leaped as the gun went off, knocking Joseph sideways, and the bullet spent its force in the ceiling.

WHEN the struggle was over, ended by Abdullah's powerful arms, Chafik rose with the gun in his hand. He broke the gun and emptied the cylinder. There were three spent rounds, three others with steel-coated bullets. "The calibre is .32," he said. "One bullet discomfited my ear in its passage; one killed the cat; one took the life of a man."

Helen Atesian gasped. "Surely not Joseph! He didn't——"

The inspector shook his head. "No, but he is not entirely guiltless. Nor is your sister-in-law." He turned to fix sombre eyes on Madame Chauvian.

She was like a statue, still and white; her black garments accentuated her stark pallor, even her lips were marble.

Chafik said quickly, "Madame, you killed him as surely as if you had placed the gun to his head. He wished to release his wife. He knew his own guilt and could find no peace in keeping apart the two he had separated. But you used the weapon of family pride against him. You hated the wife, but you hated exposure of the family skeleton even more." Chafik paused, and then added sternly, "As always you had the stronger will. You gave that tortured man no choice. There was only one solution for your brother. He shot himself."

The woman shrank within the husk of her widow's clothes.

Chafik continued softly: "He left a letter propped against the bottle, so carefully arranged on the table by the chair. I am sure it was addressed to Mr. Ashford, for whom he had left the house door open, preferring him to find him and break the news to his wife, rather than the police. You took that letter, madame. Without doubt it explained that he killed himself in atonement for destroying the letters, for keeping the woman he loved from the man she loved."

Chafik looked at Joseph, quiet now in Abdullah's powerful grip. "But the scratch on your arm, old man, gave me my glimpse of the real story. You could not manage the cat. Nobody could—except one man. . . .

"And Leon Atesian was a very thoughtful, a very kindly man. He remembered his cat and killed it because nobody could care for it, not even the faithful Joseph. For the cat, life did not have the complications it had for the rest of his family. Perhaps alone of those he loved, the cat acknowledged him as master—its only master."

THE END

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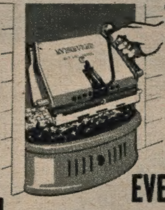

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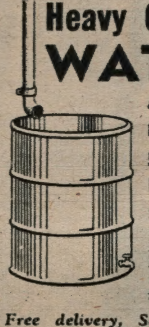

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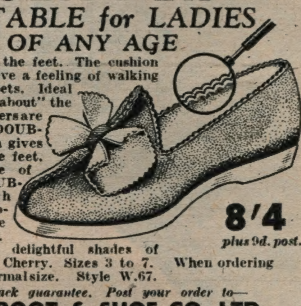

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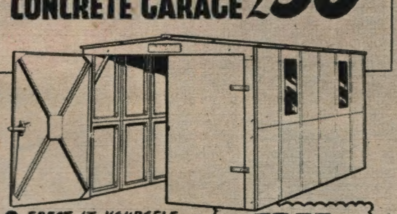

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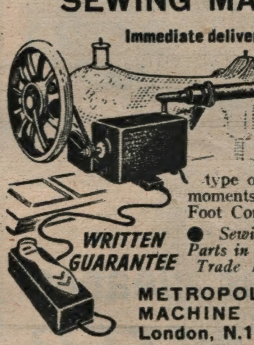

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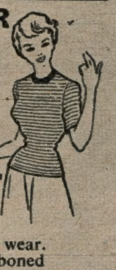

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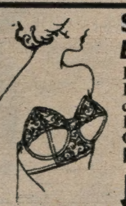

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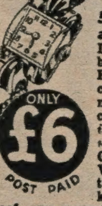

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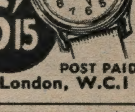

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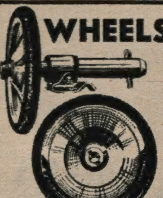

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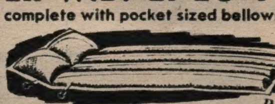

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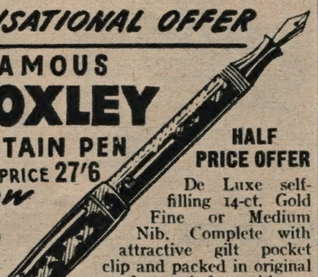

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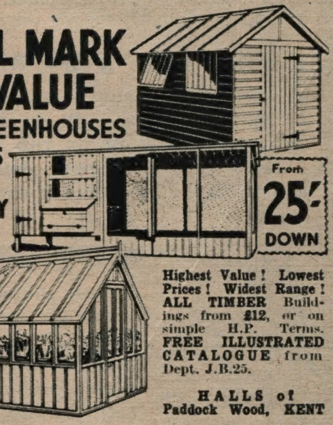

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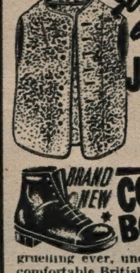

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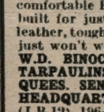

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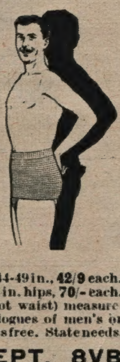

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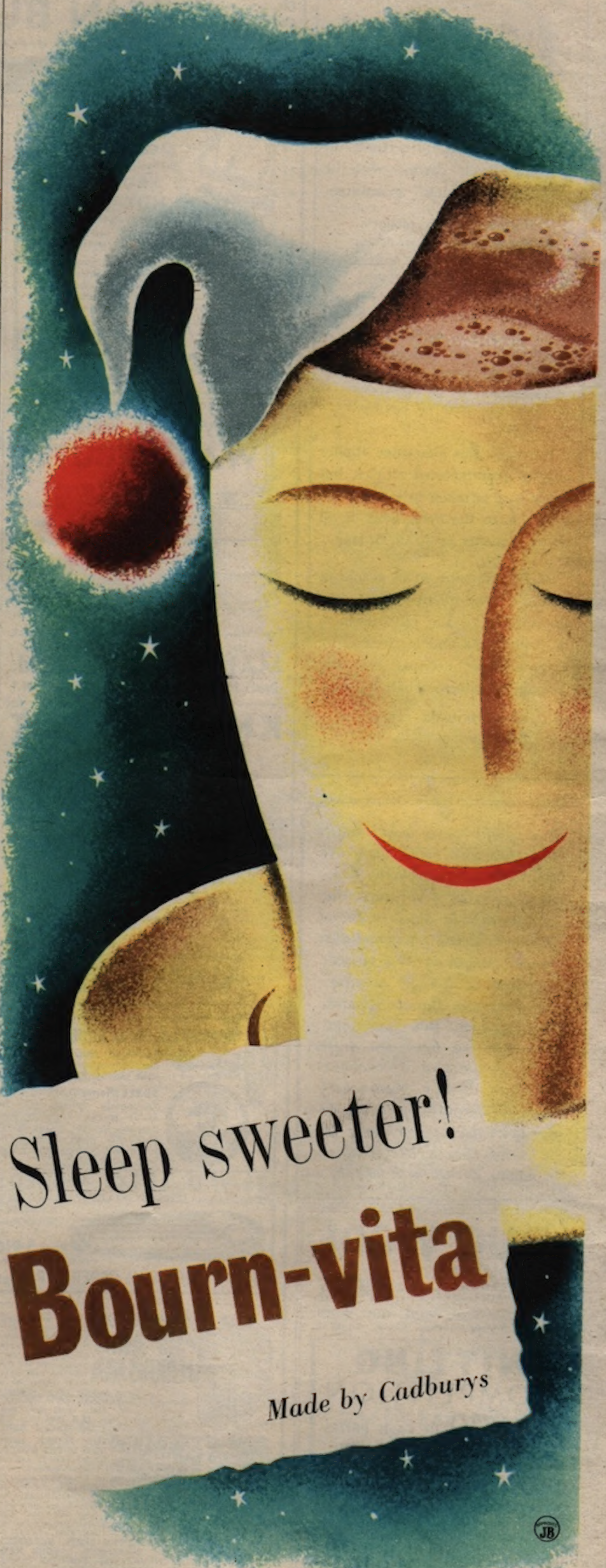

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